MARVEL

AGENT VENOM

CULLEN BUNN
RICK REMENDER
ROBBIE THOMPSON
TOM FOWLER
KIM JACINTO
LAN MEDINA
TONY MOORE
ARIEL OLIVETTI
DECLAN SHALVEY
THONY SILAS

AGENT VENOM

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #574
WRITER **MARC GUGGENHEIM**
PENCILLER **BARRY KITSON**
INKER **MARK FARMER**
COLOR ARTIST **ANTONIO FABELA**

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #654
WRITER **DAN SLOTT**
PENCILERS **PAULO SIQUEIRA** & **RONAN CLIQUET**
INKERS **PAULO SIQUEIRA, ROLAND PARIS** & **GREG ADAMS**
COLOR ARTIST **FABIO D'AURIA**

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #654.1
WRITER **DAN SLOTT**
PENCILER **HUMBERTO RAMOS**
INKER **CARLOS CUEVAS**
COLOR ARTIST **EDGAR DELGADO**
COVER ART **PAULO SIQUEIRA**
SPECIAL THANKS TO **RICK REMENDER**

VENOM #1-2 & #4
WRITER **RICK REMENDER**
PENCILER **TONY MOORE**
INKERS **CRIMELAB! STUDIOS** WITH **SANDU FLOREA** & **KARL KESEL** (#1)
COLOR ARTIST **JOHN RAUCH**
COVER ART **JOE QUESADA, DANNY MIKI** & **RICHARD ISANOVE** (#1); **TONY MOORE** & **JOHN RAUCH** (#2); **MIKE McKONE** & **MORRY HOLLOWELL** (#4)

VENOM #3 & #5-8
WRITER **RICK REMENDER**
PENCILERS **TOM FOWLER** WITH **TONY MOORE** (#5)
INKERS **TOM FOWLER** WITH **CRIMELAB! STUDIOS** (#5)
COLOR ARTIST **JOHN RAUCH**
COVER ART **MIKE DEODATO JR.** & **RAIN BEREDO** (#3); **TONY MOORE** (#5); **TONY MOORE** & **JOHN RAUCH** (#6-8)
SPECIAL THANKS TO **DAN SLOTT**

VENOM #9
WRITER **RICK REMENDER**
ARTIST **STEFANO CASELLI**
COLOR ARTIST **FRANK MARTIN**
COVER ART **JOHN TYLER CHRISTOPHER**

VENOM #10-12, #13.4 & #15
WRITER **RICK REMENDER**
PENCILER **LAN MEDINA**
INKERS **NELSON DeCASTRO** WITH **TERRY PALLOT** (#13.4, #15)
COLOR ARTISTS **MARTE GRACIA** (#10-12, #13.4) & **ANDRES MOSSA** (#15) WITH **JOHN RAUCH** (#12) & **ANTONIO FABELA** (#13.4)
COVER ART **TONY MOORE** WITH **DAVE STEWART** (#10), **MORRY HOLLOWELL** (#11), **DEAN WHITE** (#12) & **JOHN RAUCH** (#15); **STEFANO CASELLI** & **FRANK MARTIN** (#13.4)

VENOM #13-14
WRITER **RICK REMENDER**
ARTIST **TONY MOORE**
COLOR ARTIST **VAL STAPLES**
COVER ART **STEFANO CASELLI** & **FRANK MARTIN**

VENOM #13.1
WRITER **ROB WILLIAMS**
ARTIST **LEE GARBETT**
COLOR ARTIST **ROB SCHWAGER**
COVER ART **STEFANO CASELLI** & **FRANK MARTIN**

VENOM #13.2
WRITER **ROB WILLIAMS**
ARTIST & COLOR ARTIST **SANA TAKEDA**
COVER ART **STEFANO CASELLI** & **FRANK MARTIN**

VENOM #13.3
WRITER **JEFF PARKER**
ARTIST **JULIAN TOTINO TEDESCO**
COLOR ARTIST **DONO SÁNCHEZ-ALMARA**
COVER ART **STEFANO CASELLI** & **FRANK MARTIN**

VENOM #16-17
WRITERS **RICK REMENDER** WITH **CULLEN BUNN** (#17)
PENCILER **KEV WALKER**
INKERS **KEV WALKER** (#16) & **TERRY PALLOT** (#17)
COLOR ARTIST **CHRIS SOTOMAYOR**
COVER ART **MIKE del MUNDO**

VENOM #18-21
WRITERS **RICK REMENDER** & **CULLEN BUNN**
PENCILERS **LAN MEDINA** WITH **ROBERT ATKINS** (#20)
INKERS **NELSON DeCASTRO** (#18-20) AND **TERRY PALLOT, CHRIS SOTOMAYOR** & **KARL KESEL** (#21) WITH **RICK KETCHAM** (#20)
COLOR ARTIST **CHRIS SOTOMAYOR**
COVER ART **TONY MOORE** & **JOHN RAUCH** (#18); **TONY MOORE** & **EDGAR DELGADO** (#19, #21); **MIKE del MUNDO** (#20)

VENOM #22
WRITER **RICK REMENDER**
ARTIST **DECLAN SHALVEY**
COLOR ARTIST **LEE LOUGHRIDGE**
COVER ART **TONY MOORE** & **VAL STAPLES**

VENOM #23-25
WRITER **CULLEN BUNN**
PENCILER **THONY SILAS**
INKERS **NELSON DeCASTRO** WITH **WALDEN WONG** & **RICK KETCHAM** (#25)
COLOR ARTISTS **CHRIS SOTOMAYOR** WITH **ANDRES MOSSA** (#25)
COVER ART **PATCH ZIRCHER** & **MARTE GRACIA**

AGENT VENOM

MINIMUM CARNAGE: ALPHA & OMEGA

WRITERS **CULLEN BUNN** & **CHRISTOPHER YOST**
PENCILER **LAN MEDINA**
INKERS **KARL KESEL** & **WALDEN WONG**
WITH **CAM SMITH** *(ALPHA)* AND
JAIME MENDOZA & **BIT** *(OMEGA)*
OMEGA EPILOGUE ARTISTS **DECLAN SHALVEY** & **KHOI PHAM**
COLOR ARTISTS **CHRIS SOTOMAYOR** *(ALPHA)* &
SOTOCOLOR *(OMEGA)*
COVER ART **CLAYTON CRAIN**

SCARLET SPIDER #10-11

WRITER **CHRISTOPHER YOST**
PENCILERS **KHOI PHAM** WITH **REILLY BROWN**
INKERS **TOM PALMER** WITH **CHRIS SOTOMAYOR** (#10)
COLOR ARTISTS **EDGAR DELGADO** WITH **CHRIS SOTOMAYOR** (#10)
COVER ART **RYAN STEGMAN** WITH **MARTE GRACIA** (#10)
& **EDGAR DELGADO** (#11)
SPECIAL THANKS TO **CULLEN BUNN**

VENOM #26-27 & #31-35

WRITER **CULLEN BUNN**
ARTIST **DECLAN SHALVEY**
COLOR ARTIST **LEE LOUGHRIDGE**
COVER ART **PATCH ZIRCHER** & **MARTE GRACIA** (#26-27);
PAULO SIQUEIRA & **ANDRES MOSSA** (#31);
SHANE DAVIS, MICHELLE DELECKI &
MORRY HOLLOWELL (#32);
DECLAN SHALVEY & **JORDIE BELLAIRE** (#33-35)
SPECIAL THANKS TO **CHRISTOPHER YOST**

VENOM #27.1

WRITER **CULLEN BUNN**
ARTIST **MARCO CHECCHETTO**
COLOR ARTIST **FABIO D'AURIA**
COVER ART **JOE QUINONES**

VENOM #28-30

WRITER **CULLEN BUNN**
PENCILERS **THONY SILAS** WITH **ROGER ROBINSON** (#30)
INKERS **NELSON DeCASTRO** WITH **TERRY PALLOT** (#29) AND
JAIME MENDOZA, BIT & **ROGER ROBINSON** (#30)
COLOR ARTISTS **CHRIS SOTOMAYOR** (#28-29) AND
ANDRES MOSSA & **ANTONIO FABELA** (#29-30)
COVER ART **SHANE DAVIS, MICHELLE DELECKI**
& **MORRY HOLLOWELL**

VENOM #36

WRITER **CULLEN BUNN**
ARTIST **PEPE LARRAZ**
COLOR ARTIST **LEE LOUGHRIDGE**
COVER ART **DECLAN SHALVEY** & **JORDIE BELLAIRE**

VENOM #37-39

WRITER **CULLEN BUNN**
ARTISTS **KIM JACINTO** WITH **MIKE HENDERSON** (#39)
COLOR ARTIST **LEE LOUGHRIDGE**
COVER ART **DECLAN SHALVEY** & **JORDIE BELLAIRE**

VENOM #40-42

WRITER **CULLEN BUNN**
ARTIST **JORGE COELHO**
COLOR ARTIST **LEE LOUGHRIDGE**
COVER ART **DECLAN SHALVEY** & **JORDIE BELLAIRE**

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #1-7

WRITER **ROBBIE THOMPSON**
ARTIST & COLOR ARTIST **ARIEL OLIVETTI**
COVER ART **ARIEL OLIVETTI**

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #8-10

WRITER **ROBBIE THOMPSON**
ARTISTS **KIM JACINTO** WITH **R.B. SILVA** (#9) & **ARIO ANINDITO** (#10)
COLOR ARTISTS **JAVA TARTAGLIA** WITH **ANDREW CROSSLEY** (#10)
COVER ART **ARIEL OLIVETTI** (#8-9); **ZACH HOWARD**
& **NELSON DÁNIEL** (#10)

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #11-13

WRITER **ROBBIE THOMPSON**
ARTIST **GERARDO SANDOVAL**
COLOR ARTIST **DONO SÁNCHEZ-ALMARA**
COVER ART **ZACH HOWARD** & **NELSON DÁNIEL**

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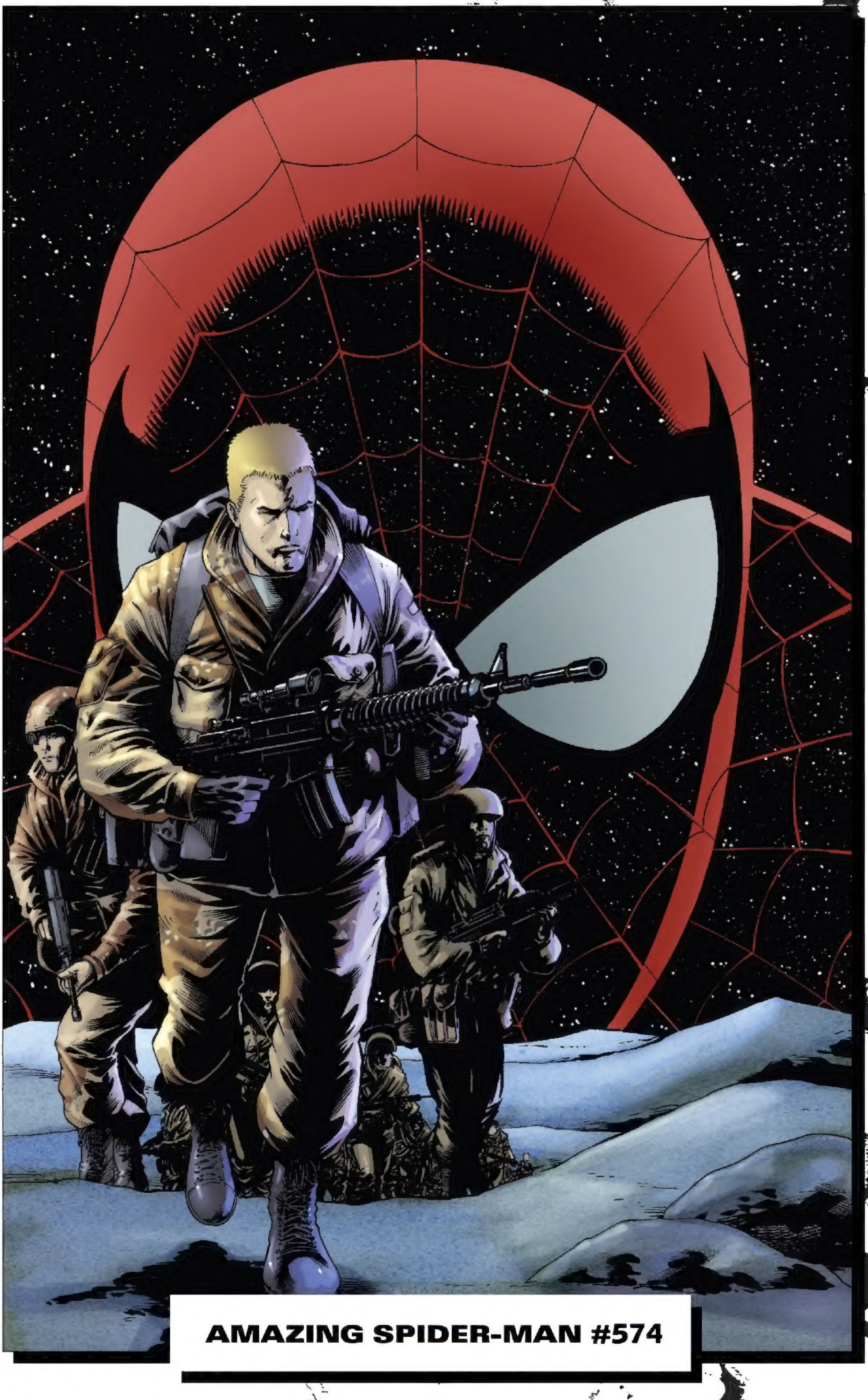


AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #574

Landstuhl, Germany.

December.

Iraq War.

SELFLESS SERVICE

Day 2104.

IT'S EVENING IN THE DESERT...

SEASONS GREETINGS

I'M TIRED AND I'M COLD...

Merry Christmas!

Hope you don't already have an iPod. I put a song on it for you. Seemed appropriate. You're missed here. Come back home soon. And come back safe, alright?

Your pal, Peter

BUT I AM JUST A SOLDIER, I DO WHAT I AM TOLD...

AND I JUST GOT YOUR LETTER...

AND THIS IS WHAT I READ: YOU SAID, "I'M FADING FROM YOUR MEMORY...

Christmas In Fallüjah

...SO I'M JUST AS GOOD AS DEAD.

CORPORAL THOMPSON?

YEAH?

SEASONS GREETINGS

GENERAL FAZEKAS. YOU GOT A MINUTE OR TEN FOR ME?

WELL, YOU'RE INTERRUPTING MY BILLY JOEL TIME, BUT SURE. I DON'T GET A LOT OF VISITORS. 'SPECIALLY NOT ONES WITH FOUR STARS.

SEASONS GREETINGS

YOU MIND IF I SIT DOWN?

ONLY IF YOU DON'T MIND IF I DON'T STAND UP.

AT LEAST YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR REMAINS UNINJURED, CORPORAL.

FLASH.

YOU CAN CALL ME FLASH. EVERYBODY DOES.

WHAT EARNED YOU THAT NAME?

IT'S OKAY, EUGENE. IT WAS NICE. REALLY.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL.

THAT SO? YOU PLAY COLLEGE BALL, TOO?

YEP. FULL RIDE TO EMPIRE STATE UNTIL I DROPPED OUT.

WHICH WOULD BE WHEN YOU ENLISTED.

"*VOLUNTEERED*, IN FACT. YOU DID A FEW OTHER TOURS OF DUTY, I BELIEVE."

YOU GOT YOUR DISCHARGE, yadda yadda yadda...THEN THEY CALLED UP INACTIVE RESERVES... yadda yadda yadda... YOU WERE IN *IRAQ*, AM I RIGHT?

IF THE FILE SAYS SO...

THE FILE SAYS SO. AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT *ELSE* THE FILE SAYS.

IT SAYS I'M SUPPOSED TO INTERVIEW YOU IN CONNECTION WITH A RECOMMENDATION YOU RECEIVE THE *MEDAL OF HONOR.*

MIND IF I ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS?

SIR, I AIN'T GOING ANYWHERE. YOU CAN ASK MORE'N A FEW.

YEAH, I FIGURED THAT'D BE YOUR REACTION.

Y'KNOW, WE'VE ONLY AWARDED FOUR MEDALS OF HONOR FOR SERVICE IN IRAQ SO FAR, SO THIS IS KIND OF A SPECIAL THING. AND THE M.O.H. IS PRETTY SPECIAL TO BEGIN WITH.

GENERALLY... that's a little pun... I LIKE TO GET SOME BACKGROUND ON THE CANDIDATE FIRST...

NOW, YOU GREW UP IN QUEENS, NEW YORK...

SEASONS GREETINGS!

YES, SIR. FOREST HILLS, 11375.

FATHER WAS A POLICEMAN, I SEE. I SUPPOSE YOU GREW UP FOLLOWING HIS EXAMPLE.

WHO'D YOUR MOM STEP OUT ON ME WITH, BOY?! IT MUST'VE BEEN SOMEBODY, 'CAUSE THERE'S NO WAY A LOSER LIKE *YOU* COULD BE ANY SON OF *MINE!*

NOT REALLY. THERE WAS ANOTHER REASON-- FORGET IT. IT'S STUPID.

SPIDER-MAN ISN'T STUPID.

HOW DID YOU--?

IN HIGH SCHOOL YOU STARTED A SPIDER-MAN FAN CLUB. THE FIRST OF ONLY THREE IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY, IN FACT.

UM, WHO TOLD YOU--?

IT'S IN YOUR FBI FILE.

I HAVE AN FBI FILE?

SON, YOU STARTED A CLUB CELEBRATING THE EXPLOITS OF, AT ***BEST***, A MASKED VIGILANTE AND, AT WORST, A SUPER-POWERED MENACE TO LAW AND ORDER.

OF ***COURSE*** THE FBI OPENED A FILE.

"IN POINT OF FACT, YOU FIRST GOT THEIR ATTENTION WHEN YOU WERE ***ABDUCTED*** BY THE LEADER OF A SOVEREIGN NATION."

LET ME *OUT* OF HERE! *PLEASE!* I'M *NOT* SPIDER-MAN! YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE! *HONEST!* YOU'VE *GOT* TO BELIEVE ME! YOU'VE *GOT* TO!

SILENCE, YOU CRINGING, SNIVELING COWARD! THE FAMOUS *SPIDER-MAN!*

BAH! YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A FRIGHTENED WEAKLING!

YOU MIND IF I ASK WHERE THE FASCINATION WITH SPIDER-MAN CAME FROM?

DOES IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE MEDAL?

I GUESS I COULD JUST SAY IT'S THE MEDAL OF HONOR AND I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW WHERE YOUR SENSE OF HONOR COMES FROM.

BUT THE REAL TRUTH IS, I'M JUST CURIOUS.

SPIDEY--ER, SPIDER-MAN, HE'S *MISUNDERSTOOD.*

NOBODY APPRECIATES HIM FOR WHAT HE IS, BUT HE JUST KEEPS GOING.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM, NO MATTER WHO'S DOING IT TO HIM...

"...HE JUST KEEPS GOING."

WELL, LOOK AT THAT, TURNS OUT IT *DOES* HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE MEDAL, AFTER ALL.

NOT SURE I FOLLOW YOU.

WELL, I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY YOU DID THAT THING YOU DID.

THAT THING...?

YOU DIDN'T THINK WE WERE CONSIDERING GIVING YOU THE MEDAL OF HONOR FOR YOUR GOOD LOOKS, DID YOU?

SIR, I DON'T NEED ANY MEDAL--

TELL YOU WHAT: WHY DON'T YOU JUST WALK ME THROUGH WHAT HAPPENED.

WHERE SHOULD I START?

"HOW ABOUT THE BEGINNING? START WITH THE STRYKER."

"OKAY, IT WAS A STRYKER I.C.V. IT'S USUALLY WHAT WE RODE THROUGH BREACHES IN. SOMETIMES A BRADLEY, BUT USUALLY IT WAS THE STRYKER."

"THE BREACH? THIS WAS *MOSUL.*"

"YESSIR, A CORDON-AND-SEARCH MISSION."

"CORDON-AND-SEARCH?"

"SIR?"

"JUST NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM."

"YOU'VE NEVER SERVED IN A FORWARD AREA, SIR?"

"NO. I GOT MY STARS WORKING AT THE PENTAGON."

"OH. WELL, A CORDON-AND-SEARCH IS A CLEAN AND CLEAR MISSION. WE GO IN, KNOCK ON DOORS, CLEAR THE TOWN OF INSURGENTS. STANDARD STUFF."

"STANDARD. SO THERE WASN'T A PROBLEM WITH THE STRYKER?"

"WELL, SIR, THE PROBLEM WASN'T *WITH* THE STRYKER.

"WE MUST'VE HIT AN *I.E.D.* IT TURNED US ASS OVER TEAKETTLE.

"I GOT A FACE FULL OF KEVLAR FROM SERGEANT BASKI.

BASKI

"SIXTY-FIVE POUNDS OF BATTLE RATTLE STRAIGHT IN THE TEETH."

DAMMIT!

GO! GO! GO!

LET'S GO! OUT THE TOP HATCH! WE CAN'T STAY HERE!

SENUS, YOU *SLEEP* THROUGH THAT OR SOMETHING?!

MOVE!

IT'S STUCK!

"SO YOU'RE TRAPPED INSIDE A 17-TON COFFIN, SITTING DUCKS... HOW DO YOU KEEP YOUR COOL IN A SITUATION LIKE THAT?"

"I DON'T KNOW, TO BE HONEST. I GUESS I COULD SAY YOU--

"YOU 'JUST KEEP GOING'?"

"YEAH, I GUESS. YOU JUST TRY TO REMEMBER YOU CAN GET THROUGH STUFF IF YOU JUST STAY *FOCUSED*.

"SO THAT'S WHAT I DID."

"I PRETENDED THE DOOR WAS A LINEBACKER FOR ASTORIA CENTRAL."

GOOD TO GO! GOOD TO GO!

MOVE IT MOVE IT MOVE IT!

TAKE UP POSITION AT THE CLOSEST BUILDING!

GO!

BRADABRRADABRADA

"BASKI DIDN'T TELL US, HE DIDN'T HAVE TO.

"THE I.E.D. WASN'T DESIGNED TO KILL US. I MEAN, GENERALLY, I.E.D.S JUST RESULT IN 'MOBILITY KILLS,' THEY *STOP* THE STRYKER.

"WHICH MEANS WE HAVE TO GET *OUT* OF THE STRYKER.

"AND THEY'RE WAITING FOR US.

"IT'S CALLED SETTING UP A KILL ZONE."

TANGO!! TANGO!! TANGO!!

MOVE MOVE MOVE!!

GET A.S.A.W. FIRING ON THAT POSTION.

THOMPSON!

ON THE ROOF!

SUPPRESSING FIRE!

BRRRATATTAT

GET AN M4 ON THAT WINDOW!

THOMPSON

CHOOM

THOMPSON!

ENEMIES IN THE OPEN!

BOX IT! BOX IT!

"BOX IT?"

"YESSIR. THAT'S WHEN YOU SPLIT UP ALONG BOTH SIDES OF AN OPEN AREA, LIKE A COURTYARD OR A STREET, AND YOU HUG THE WALLS OF THE BUILDINGS ON EITHER SIDE INSTEAD OF GOING STRAIGHT UP THE MIDDLE."

"YOU SOUND LIKE YOU PREFER THE UP-THE-MIDDLE APPROACH."

"I LIKE TACKLING SOMETHING HEAD-ON. EVEN IF IT'S NOT ALWAYS A PERFECT PLAN."

THOMPSON, SANTOS! CLEAR THIS BUILDING! CLEAR IT AND GET UP TO THE ROOF!

SET UP OVERWATCH AND A DEFENSIVE FIRING POSITION!

HOO-*AH*. COPY THAT, SIR.

FLASH, STAY CLOSE TO MY SIX...

AAAHH!

SANTOS!

"THE INSURGENTS HAVE BEEN HOPPING THEMSELVES UP ON DRUGS...

"SOME OF 'EM ARE ON ENOUGH EPINEPHRINE, YOU COULD LIGHT 'EM UP WITH AMMO AND THEY WOULDN'T EVEN *FEEL* IT.

THOMPSON

GET CLEAR! I DON'T HAVE A SHOT!

"IT'S LIKE TRYING TO STOP A TANK.

SLAM

NUTS

CHOK

CHAK

GNF--

"ACTUALLY, YOU'D PROBABLY HAVE BETTER LUCK TRYING TO STOP A TANK.

AAAAAA-!

"SOMETIMES THE FEAR JUST TAKES OVER.

"THE FEAR TAKES CONTROL AND YOU'RE NO LONGER YOURSELF.

RAH--

"AND YOU JUST DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

GOOD TO GO.

"ANYWAY... WE MADE OUR MOVE UP TO THE SECOND FLOOR."

"AND THAT'S WHEN..."

"YES, SIR. THAT'S WHEN THINGS WENT SOUTH.

HRN HRN

KERULP

SANTOS

"WE KNEW THE HAJ WERE RIGGING UP I.E.D.'S AND BOOBY TRAPS IN THE HOUSES WE WERE CLEARING, BUT THAT'S THE THING...

"YOU'RE GONNA CLEAR A HOUSE, YOU'VE GOTTA MOVE QUICK AND CONFIDENT, THAT'S THE KEY. IF YOU SLOW DOWN, MOVE CAREFULLY TO AVOID TRIPWIRES AND SUCH...

"...THEN YOU MAKE MISTAKES."

SANTOS! STOP! *HOLD UP!*

WHAT'S THAT, SIR?

TIK

SANTOS.

SANTOS, SITREP.

FLASH...

I THINK I'M IN A BAD WAY HERE, FLASH.

HANG IN THERE, SANTOS. HANG TIGHT, BUDDY!

LIGHTNING SIX, LIGHTNING SIX, THIS IS LIGHTNING *THREE*. LIGHTNING TWO IS DOWN, CONDITION SERIOUS!

LIGH-- THREE SKZZT--NING THR--SKZZT--ITION. SKZZT--GAIN. GIVE--

RADIO'S OUT. MUST'VE GOTTEN HIT IN THE BLAST. HOW YOU DOING?

BEEN BETTER.

COPY THAT. OKAY, LISTEN, I'M GONNA DOUBLE-BACK, SEE IF I CAN'T GET US SOME HELP, ALRIGHT?

...

SANTOS, THAT SOUND LIKE A PLAN OR WHAT?

HOO-AH.

HOO-- %?&#ING-- AH.

"AND THAT'S WHEN YOU GOT HIT?"

"YEAH. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE THEY CAME FROM."

"HOW MANY?"

"SIX."

"SIX AGAINST ONE. KIND OF IMPOSSIBLE ODDS."

"KIND OF.

"BUT NOT *COMPLETELY* IMPOSSIBLE.

"BODY ARMOR TOOK MOST OF IT, BUT THEY GOT SOME GOOD HITS IN ON MY LEGS.

THOMPSON

"NOT THAT I DIDN'T GET IN SOME HITS OF MY OWN, THOUGH.

"STILL, WHEN YOU'RE OUTNUMBERED, SOMETIMES THE ONLY THING TO DO IS RETREAT."

"YOU WEREN'T AFRAID THEY'D GO AFTER SANTOS INSTEAD OF YOU?"

"YEAH, I WAS BANKING ON THE FACT THEY'D HAVE AS MUCH TROUBLE GETTING TO HIM AS I HAD."

"YOU COULD'VE GOTTEN OUT AT THAT POINT. GOTTEN TO SAFETY..."

"YEAH. AND MAYBE I COULD'VE GOTTEN SOME HELP BEFORE THE HAJ GOT TO SANTOS OR BEFORE SANTOS BLED OUT.

"YOU COULD'VE BLED OUT."

"YEAH, AND THAT'S A FACT. IN ANY CASE, I COULD BARELY FEEL MY LEGS THROUGH THE PAIN, MUCH LESS STAND ON THEM...

"MUCH LESS *FIGHT* ON THEM.

"THESE INSURGENTS...

"LIKE I SAID, SOME OF 'EM ARE ON ENOUGH EPINEPHRINE, YOU COULD LIGHT 'EM UP WITH AMMO AND THEY WOULDN'T EVEN FEEL IT.

"LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO GET INTO ANY KINDA TROUBLE HERE.

"IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS DOING DRUGS, OKAY?

"EPINEPHRINE IS ISSUED TO INFANTRY AS A DEFENSE AGAINST CHEMICAL WEAPONS. IN FACT, THAT'S PROBABLY HOW THE HAJJI GOT HIS HANDS ON THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE."

"YOU WEREN'T FACING CHEMICAL WEAPONS HERE, HOWEVER."

"NO, BUT SOMETIMES YOU NEED WHATEVER EDGE, EVEN AN ARTIFICIAL ONE, YOU CAN GET."

"SO YOU DON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS?"

"NO SIR. NOT A ONE.

"IF I HADN'T COME BACK FOR HIM, HE'D BE *DEAD*."

"TWO OF THE INSURGENTS HAD HEARD SANTOS MOANING BEHIND THE DEBRIS AND WERE GETTING READY TO FINISH OFF THE JOB.

"BUT THE DOCTORS TOLD YOU...DID THEY EXPLAIN THE *CONSEQUENCES* OF THAT DECISION?"

"YOU MEAN THAT I DIDN'T GET A MEDEVAC FOR *ME* IN TIME?"

"YOU'D LOST A LOT OF BLOOD...WERE STILL *LOSING* A LOT OF BLOOD."

"SANTOS IS ALIVE. YOU REALLY GOT TO ASK THESE QUESTIONS?"

"I NEED TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH YOUR HEAD."

THOMPSON

SANTOS

"WHAT WAS GOING THROUGH MY HEAD WAS THAT THE GOOD GUYS THINK'A OTHERS BEFORE THEY THINK OF THEMSELVES.

"ANYWAY, WE GOT OUTTA THERE, DIDN'T WE?"

"YES, YOU DID.

"AND I ASSUMED THE DOCTORS EXPLAINED..."

"YEAH, THEY TOLD ME. THEY SAID I'D LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD. THAT THERE WAS *TISSUE DAMAGE.*

"THAT IF I'D GOTTEN MEDICAL ATTENTION SOONER..."

...THEY PROBABLY COULD'VE SAVED MY LEGS.

I KNOW. I'M SORRY.

I'M SURE A MEDAL DOESN'T FEEL LIKE MUCH OF A CONSOLATION...

I DON'T NEED A MEDAL, SIR. NOT TO REMIND ME TO DO THE RIGHT THING, AT LEAST.

TRUTH IS, I'VE BEEN LUCKY TO KNOW PEOPLE WHOSE EXAMPLE REMINDS ME EVERY DAY.

DEDICATED TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVE, HAVE SERVED AND WILL SERVE IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WITH BRAVERY AND HONOR.

(With special thanks to Sergeant Jeffrey Guerin, U.S. Army 25th Infantry Division.)

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #654

"FAIR WARNING, CORPORAL. THERE IS STILL TIME TO PULL OUT."

NO, SIR. I AM READY TO SERVE.

THOMPSON EUGENE F. 987-08-1962 TYPE A CATHOLIC

UNDERSTOOD. I TRUST MACKENZIE HERE HAS INFORMED YOU THIS IS A DANGEROUS PROCEDURE--

--AND WILL MOST LIKELY CAUSE ITS FAIR SHARE OF PAIN AND DISCOMFORT.

MMMYEAH. ON A SCALE OF ONE TO TEN? THIS IS...

"OH, DEAR GOD! WHY ME? WHY ME?!"

CUTE, DOC. BUT THE FACT IS, I *HAVE* BEEN THINKING THAT. OUT OF ALL THE GRUNTS YOU COULD'VE GOTTEN, GENERAL DODGE...

...WHY ME? WITH MY DISABILITY--

TRUST ME. I CAN LOOK PAST THAT.

LET ME TELL YOU WHAT I *DO* SEE. CORPORAL EUGENE "*FLASH*" THOMPSON, A MAN WHO LITERALLY RISKED LIFE AND LIMB TO SAVE EVERY MAN IN HIS UNIT.

A GOOD SOLDIER. A TRUE PATRIOT. AND MOST OF ALL...

"...MY *DOG* LIKES YOU. AND SAMSON IS A VERY GOOD JUDGE OF CHARACTER."

ALL SYSTEMS CHECK. WE'RE READY TO INITIATE *PROJECT REBIRTH 2.0.*

DO WE *HAVE* TO CALL IT THAT? NO OFFENSE TO STEVE ROGERS, BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN MORE OF A SPIDEY-GUY THAN A CAP-GUY.

NOW *THAT*, FLASH...

REBIRTH

...THAT *IS* ONE OF THE REASONS WE CHOSE YOU.

READY? HERE WE GO...

VWWW

GYEAH

"FIGHT IT, SOLDIER!

"MACKENZIE SAYS WE'VE PUMPED YOU FULL OF ALL THE CHEMICALS YOU NEED TO CONTROL THIS ALIEN...

"...BUT YOU AND ME, WE KNOW DIFFERENT, THOMPSON.

"YOU ARE ONE OF AMERICA'S BEST AND BRIGHTEST!

"AND THAT IS *ALL* YOU NEED--TO BEND THIS THING TO *YOUR WILL!*"

LEGS. I *KNEW* THIS WOULD HAPPEN... *IF* IT WORKED, BUT...

...I MADE IT GROW ME LEGS.

YES!

I CAN STAND AGAIN. I CAN *WALK!*

HELL, SON. IF YOU WANT, YOU CAN WALK UP *WALLS.*

IN FACT, LET'S SEE WHAT YOU CAN *REALLY* DO.

"WEB-SHOOTING.

WALL-CRAWLING. CHECK.

"ENHANCED STRENGTH.

"SHAPE-SHIFTING BASED ATTACKS.

"INCREASED SPEED AND AGILITY."

AMAZING!

IT'S EVERYTHING I EVER DREAMED IT WOULD BE...

CHECK IT OUT-- I'M *SPIDER-MAN!*

NO. YOU'RE *VENOM.*

WHA...?!

WHY CAN'T I BE SPIDER-MAN? THERE'RE TWO HULKS, TWO CAPS, WHY CAN'T THERE BE TWO--

WE'RE SENDING YOU AFTER TERRORISTS. WE'VE DONE PSYCHE PROFILES. AND TERRORIST AREN'T AFRAID OF SPIDER-MAN.

SPEAKING OF THE KILLING...LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO SOME OF YOUR NEW ORDNANCE...

THIS IS THE *MULTI-GUN*. SPECIALLY KEYED TO YOUR DNA. IT COST A LOT. DON'T LOSE IT.

KINDA CLUMSY FOR A STANDARD AUTOMATIC.

THEY KNOW HE DOESN'T KILL. VENOM, HOWEVER, WILL KILL YA, EAT YA, AND COME BACK FOR SECONDS.

WE'LL DENY IT, OF COURSE, BUT IT'LL GET OUT-- TO THE RIGHT CIRCLES. AND WHEN IT DOES, THAT'S A NICE REP TO HAVE.

SHKK

OH!

IT'S ALSO A HIGH-POWERED SNIPER RIFLE.

IT'S A FIREARM FOR EVERY OCCASION.

BUT NEVER FORGET, THAT SUIT--

--THE ALIEN SYMBIOTE, IS YOUR GREATEST WEAPON.

FLORP

BUT THESE WILL GIVE YOU A FEW MORE TRICKS UP YOUR SLEEVE.

WHAT ARE THEY?

KNOCKOUT DRUGS. TRUTH SERUM. AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS OF MY OWN DESIGN.

ALONG WITH VARIOUS KNIVES AND CUTTING TOOLS...

...THE SUIT CAN ALSO FASHION A SYRINGE AS A DELIVERY SYSTEM.

DANG, MACKENZIE. YOU GOT ME HOOKED UP WITH EVERYTHING THIS SIDE OF A SPIDER-SENSE.

YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING BETTER THAN THAT, THOMPSON. YOU'VE GOT *ME*.

UM... HULLO?

CAPTAIN KATHERINE GLOVER, SPECIAL FORCES.

I'LL BE OVERSEEING ALL *VENOM* MISSIONS, COORDINATING WITH OPS, PROVIDING BACKUP IN THE FIELD, AND...

...THANKS TO THE LISTENING DEVICE IMPLANTED DURING YOUR DRUG TREATMENTS, I'LL BE THE VOICE ON HIGH IN YOUR HEAD.

YOU SURE 'BOUT THAT, BABE?

'CAUSE THE MINUTE YOU WALKED IN, YOU WERE THE VOICE IN MY HEART.

ACCORDING TO YOUR FILE, THAT SPOT'S FILLED BY ONE ELIZABETH "*BETTY*" BRANT.

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY...

...LET ME BE PERFECTLY CLEAR.

WAP

HEY! WHERE DO YOU GET OFF--

I'M NOT BABYSITTING YOU, THOMPSON. I'M MONITORING THE ALIEN. *THAT'S* MY JOB.

THE FIRST SIGN *IT'S* IN CONTROL, I PUSH THIS KILL-SWITCH, FRY IT, AND LEAVE YOU HANGING IN THE WIND.

LITERALLY WITHOUT A LEG TO STAND ON. SO WHEN I SAY JUMP, YOU DON'T SAY "*HOW HIGH?*"...

"...YOU SHUT THE HELL UP AND *JUMP!*"

DOZEN MEN. NON-LETHAL FORCE. DONE. WHAT ELSE YOU GOT?

'CAUSE I COULD DO THIS ALL DAY, CAPTAIN.

THAT'LL DO. FOR NOW.

WE'RE COMING UP ON THE 48-HOUR WINDOW.

HOW ARE HIS LEVELS?

THEY'RE GOOD, AARON. HOLDING.

BUT HE'S GETTING TESTY. YOU CAN HEAR IT.

CORPORAL, YOU CAN STAND DOWN. COME INSIDE. WE'RE DONE FOR THE DAY.

ALL RIGHT, COACH. BUT I'M TELLING YOU I'M FRESH AS A DAISY. YOU CAN KEEP ME IN FOR ANOTHER--

GRRR

HEY, WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO THE MUTT?

AWROOO!

RARR!

MORE LIKE WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU, FLASH. YOU'VE READ THE FILES. THE LONGER THAT SUIT STAYS ON, THE GREATER THE CHANCE OF *PERMANENT* BONDING.

AFTER TODAY, YOU'VE GOT TWENTY MISSIONS TOPS. THEN YOUR TOUR AS *VENOM* IS *OVER*. AND IT'S ON TO THE NEXT JARHEAD--

I KNOW!

AND YOU'RE GOOD WITH THAT?

YEAH! OKAY?! JUST GET THIS THING OFF ME. *DO IT!*

ZZEEEEE

INITIATING FULL SONIC PURGE.

GENERAL DODGE, SORRY FOR THAT OUTBURST BACK THERE. WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

AND THANK YOU, SIR. NOT FOR THE WALKING, OR THE CHANCE TO BE--WELL--LIKE MY GREATEST HERO...

...THANK YOU FOR THE CHANCE TO SERVE MY COUNTRY. I WON'T LET YOU DOWN.

I KNOW YOU WON'T, SON.

C'MON, LET'S GET YOU HOME. UNLESS YOU'D LIKE TO HANG OUT IN D.C. SOME MORE...

...Y'KNOW THERE'S THIS REALLY NEAT SCIENCE EXHIBIT AT THE SMITHSONIAN AND I WAS THINKING WE COULD--

HEH. Y'KNOW, MACKENZIE, YOU REMIND ME OF THIS GUY I KNOW...AND *NOT* IN A GOOD WAY.

ALL RIGHT, HE'S GONE. OUT WITH IT, KAT. I CAN HEAR YOU GRINDING YOUR TEETH FROM HERE.

WHAT IS IT?

GENERAL...YOU HAVEN'T TOLD HIM, HAVE YOU, BRAD?

THAT HE'S THE *SECOND* SERVICEMAN TO GO THROUGH THIS PROCESS.

HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT CAL HENRIKSEN.

HOW THE FIRST TIME I USED THIS, I NUKED HIS BRAIN. THAT'S NOT RIGHT, SIR.

THIS CONVERSATION IS OVER, CAPTAIN. THOMPSON. WILL. BE. FINE.

BUT, SIR--

THAT IS WHY I PICKED HIM. BECAUSE HE IS A FIRST CLASS SOLDIER, A TRUE PATRIOT...

AND HE IS WILLING TO MAKE ANY SACRIFICE.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #654.1
"FLASHPOINT"

FLASHPOINT

Madripoor.

FUTURA PLAZA, THIRD TALLEST BUILDING IN THE PACIFIC RIM. STATUS: IMPENETRABLE...

...BY CONVENTIONAL MEANS.

FORTUNATELY...

POK

THWIP

IP

IP

IP

...I'M AN UNCONVENTIONAL GUY.

KATE? YOU COPY?

I WEBBED UP ALL FOUR CAMERAS...

...WITH MACKENZIE'S MAGNETIC FLUID.

THEY'LL BE SHOWING NOTHING BUT STATIC.

I'M IN. PHASE ONE COMPLETE. I'D SAY THAT PUTS US AT THE FORTY...

...WITH A NEW FIRST DOWN AND PLENTY A' TIME LEFT ON THE--

STOP!

STOP WHAT?

KATE, HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?

THE FOOTBALL METAPHORS. THE FATE OF THE FREE WORLD'S AT STAKE.

THIS ISN'T A GAME, CORPORAL THOMPSON.

CALL ME FLASH.

NO. WHEN YOU'RE IN THE SUIT, YOU'RE VENOM.

THIS AGAIN? CAN'T I BE THE NEW SPIDER-MA--

VENOM. AND WHEN YOU'RE UNDERCOVER, IT'S--

HEISMAN. GENE HEISMAN.

GREAT. HE'S TALKING LIKE JAMES BOND NOW.

SOONER WE GET THE SYMBIOTE OFF THIS AMATEUR AND ON TO A *REAL* AGENT, THE BETTER.

UM, KATE? MY COMMUNICATION IMPLANT'S STILL ON.

I CAN HEAR EVERYTHING YOU'RE SAYING.

OH, I KNOW.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT. I CAN GET THE SUIT TO MAKE A LOCK PICK FOR ME. I DON'T NEED YOU HERE TO--

I'M NOT HERE FOR *YOU*. I'M HERE TO MONITOR THE *ALIEN*. THE SECOND YOU LOSE CONTROL--

YEAH, YEAH. YOU HIT YOUR HIDDEN *"KILL SWITCH"*, FRY IT, AND LEAVE ME HANGING. GOT IT. SO...

...I'M INSIDE *WITHOUT* GOING THROUGH THEIR SECURITY. WHAT'S NEXT?

WE MINGLE, *"MR. HEISMAN."* THE PARTY'S AROUND THE CORNER...

IT'S A SECRET SUMMIT OF THE BIGGEST FINANCIAL LINCHPINS IN OUR GLOBAL ECONOMY. AND...

AND?

HANGERS ON LIKE THE COUNTESS BIANCA DEMONICO.

INTELLIGENCE BELIEVES SHE'S PART OF THE TERRORIST GROUP *ULTIMATUM*, HERE TO GATHER INTEL.

IF YOU CAN TAG HER, WE CAN TRACK HER BACK TO HER BASE *AND* HER LEADER, *FLAG SMASHER*.

AH! MR. HEISMAN, INFAMOUS AMERICAN FINANCIER.

MUCH HAVE I DESIRED TO MEET WITH YOU.

HEY THERE, MISTER...

YUSEF KASSIM. BANKER TO THE MIDDLE EAST'S LARGEST OIL COMPANY.

KASSIM! HEARD A LOT ABOUT YA, MAN.

HA! WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME. I HEAR FROM CERTAIN CIRCLES...

...THAT YOU APPEARED OVERNIGHT WITH MANY *LUCRATIVE* GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

INCOMING.

YUSEF, WHO *IS* YOUR FRIEND? YOU *MUST* INTRODUCE ME.

MR. GENE HEISMAN, COUNTESS. A YANKEE BUSINESSMAN. *NEW* MONEY.

HM. TELL ME *MORE,* MR. HEISMAN.

COUNTESS...

...WITH A KNOCKOUT LIKE YOU, I TALK WITH MY *FEET.*

WELL YOU CERTAINLY MOVE FAST.

ADMINISTERING LOCALIZED ANESTHETIC.

I CAN ALSO GO SLOW, SLOW, SLOW, QUICK, QUICK.

MMM. GENE, YOU DEFINITELY KNOW YOUR WALTZ FROM YOUR CHA CHA..

OH I GOT ALL KINDS A' MOVES.

INSERTING TRACKING CHIP.

"WHAT'D I TELL YOU? HIS FIRST MISSION WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS..."

...SATISFIED?

WITH THE RESULTS. BUT HOW WAS HE IN THE FIELD?

I WAS THERE, SIR. THOMPSON WAS...

...ADEQUATE.

UH, GENERAL DODGE? DOES YOUR DOG *HAVE* TO BE HERE? KEEPS LOOKIN' AT ME FUNNY.

DON'T KNOCK HIM, FLASH...

Washington, D.C.

PROJECT: REBIRTH HQ

...SAMSON'S A SMART PUP.

GRR

HE KNOWS YOU'RE NEAR YOUR 48-HOUR WINDOW.

WE GOTTA GET THE SYMBIOTE OFF YOU NOW!

AUTHORIZATION: DR. AARON MACKENZIE...

"...INITIATING SONIC PURGE!"

ARRHH!

RRRWOO

100% OF THE SYMBIOTE IS IN THE TUBE. NO BONDING HAS OCCURRED.

YOU'RE CLEAN, FLASH. AND GOOD FOR 19 MORE MISSIONS."

SEE? IT'S ME, BOY. JUST THE FLASH-MAN.

EVERYTHING'S BACK TO NORMAL.

WONDER WHEN'S MY NEXT ASSIGNMENT? C'MON.

HMM...I CAN'T GET THAT SONG OUT OF MY HEAD...

"WHEN MARIMBAS START TO PLAY, DANCE WITH ME, MAKE ME SWAY..."

Brooklyn.

FLASH? *SNIFF* YOU HOME?

BETTY!

GOD, I'M SUCH A JERKWAD. DAYDREAMING ABOUT DANCING WITH SOME OTHER WOMAN...

...WHEN BETTY, MY GIRL, IS... CRYING?

BETTS? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

IT'S MARLA. JONAH'S WIFE. SHE JUST-- SHE DIED, FLASH.

THE JAMESONS ARE LIKE FAMILY TO ME AND NOW-- NOW--

HOLD ON, BETTS. I'M--

WHAK

UNFF

FLASH!

IT'S ALL RIGHT. SOMETIMES I... FORGET MY LEGS AREN'T THERE ANYMORE.

HONEY...

WHATEVER. LOOK, THIS'S ABOUT *YOU*. Y'KNOW I'M *HERE* FOR YOU. ANYTHING YOU NEED.

ACTUALLY, THERE *IS* SOMETHING. IT'S PETER.

FOR SOME REASON, HE'S TAKING THIS NEWS WORSE THAN ANYONE. HE'S TOTALLY SHUT DOWN. HE WON'T--

YOU'RE ONE OF HIS BEST FRIENDS. MAYBE HE'D OPEN UP TO YOU?

SURE, BETTS. I'M ALL OVER IT.

Tribeca.

MR. PARKER? YOU JUST MISSED HIM. LEFT WITH HIS LADYFRIEND ABOUT TEN MINUTES AGO.

ANY IDEA WHERE THEY WENT? S'KINDA IMPORTANT.

1970 N. MOORE STREET

THINK THEY SAID THEY WERE GOING TO THE COFFEE BEAN.

MAYBE I'M JUMPING THE GUN HERE.

IT SOUNDS LIKE PETE'S GIRL, CARLIE COOPER, IS ALREADY ON THE CASE.

FOR A SEC I FORGOT MY PAL'S *FINALLY* GOT HIS ACT TOGETHER...

Amy's

250

...A STEADY JOB, A RELIABLE GAL, AND ALL HIS DUCKS IN A ROW.

Y'KNOW, I GOTTA ADMIT IT, I'M *PROUD* OF OL' "*PUNY PARKER.*" FOR *ONCE* IN HIS LIFE, HE'S NOT SCREWIN' EVERYTHING...

...UP?

YOU CAN'T BEAT YOURSELF UP OVER THIS, PETEY.

REALLY, MJ? YOU'RE THE *ONLY* ONE WHO KNOWS WHO I *REALLY* AM.

THE ONLY PERSON WHO *CAN* UNDERSTAND *HOW* I LET MARLA DOWN. WHY IT'S *MY* FAULT SHE'S DEAD NOW.

MJ? THIS IS GOING DOWN...

...AND YOU'RE OPENING UP TO YOUR *EX?*

WHAT THE HELL'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, PARKER?! IF CARLIE FINDS OUT ABOUT THIS--

BZTT BZTT

I GOTTA DO SOMETHING. STRAIGHTEN 'IM OUT! TELL 'IM TO GET HIS HEAD IN THE--

BZTT BZTT

DANG IT! MY PHONE...

BZTT BZTT

THOMPSON?! WHY WEREN'T YOU PICKING UP?!

Dodge

SORRY, GENERAL. HAD TO GET TO A MORE SECURE LOCATION. WHAT'S THE SITCH?

NOT GOOD. OUT OF EVERYONE AT THAT SECRET ECONOMIC SUMMIT...

...ULTIMATUM TARGETED KASSIM.

THEY SLAUGHTERED HIS BODYGUARDS AND SUCCESSFULLY EXTRACTED HIM OUT OF THE COUNTRY.

ON THE PLUS SIDE, DEMONICO WAS SPOTTED AMONG HIS ABDUCTORS.

THANKS TO THE TRACKING CHIP, WE KNOW THEY'RE IN UZBEKISTAN. YOU HAVE TO COME IN.

NOW? BUT--

WE *NEED* VENOM, CORPORAL. WE HAVE A BASIC FIX. BUT WITH THE TRACES OF SYMBIOTE IN THAT CHIP, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO *PINPOINT* IT.

I... UNDERSTAND, GENERAL DODGE. COUNTRY FIRST.

I'M ON MY WAY.

The F-119 Sky Spider

COVERTLY IN TURKISH AIRSPACE

GONNA MAKE THIS DIRT SIMPLE, CORPORAL. YOU HAVE *FOUR* OBJECTIVES.

LOCATE KASSIM. GET HIM OUT ALIVE. MEET US TEN CLICKS NORTH OF ULTIMATUM'S COMPOUND...

...AND GET THAT SUIT OFF. MACKENZIE'S ALREADY ON THE GROUND BUILDING A MOBILE SYMBIOTE CONTAINMENT UNIT.

GOT IT. WORST COMES, YOU CAN ALWAYS THROW ME AN AUDIBLE.

NOT THIS TIME, THOMPSON. STEALTH SHIELDING ON THIS BABY'LL PLAY HELL WITH OUR COMMUNICATOR. YOU MIGHT BE ON YOUR OWN.

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT... MY SECOND TIME IN THE FIELD. ONE TIME I'D ACTUALLY LIKE *BIG SISTER* CHECKING IN...

...AND YOU CHOOSE *NOW* TO SHUT UP ON ME? GREAT.

GERONIMO.

FLASH, DO YOU--SZZT--ETTING INTERFERENCE--SZZT--IKE WHAT WE--SZZT--AFRAID OF--

KATE? YOU'RE BREAKING UP.

DEFIN!--TZZZ--FROM THE STEALTH SHIELD!--TZZZ--AN'T MAKE OUT WHAT YOU'RE--TZZZ

NOT THRILLED ABOUT THIS. SURE, I *LIKE* BEING THE M.V.P...

...BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A *TEAM* PLAYER.

WHETHER YOU'RE TALKING MIDTOWN HIGH'S FIRST STRING...

...OR THE BEST DAMN UNIT IN IRAQ.

THEN AGAIN, SOMETIMES IT'S JUST YOU, THE BALL...

...AND WHATEVER IT TAKES TO REACH THE END ZONE.

PAFF

KTIK

CHUK

SENTRY ALPHA? BRAVO? SOUND OFF.

WHY IS *NO ONE* AT THIS POST?

SOMEONE'S GOING TO ANSWER FOR THIS.

YOU'RE LEAVING AN ENTRANCE POINT COMPLETELY UNGUAR--

--EKK...

Yusef Kassim's Holding Cell.

FINE. I'LL GO BACK TO LETTING MY *MACE* SPEAK FOR ME. HOLD HIM.

FLAG SMASHER!

MY APOLOGIES. I COULD NOT TELL WHEN YOU WOULD STOP TALKING.

YOUR FAMILY'S BANK CODES. OUT WITH IT, KASSIM! ONCE THEY ARE MINE...

...I WILL *BANKRUPT* YOUR MONARCHY, *TOPPLE* THEIR OLIGARCHY...

WELL?!

...AND BEGIN A CASCADE EFFECT THAT WILL *CRIPPLE* THE GLOBAL ECONOMY!

I SAID I WAS *NOT* TO BE DISTURBED.

BUT BOSS, WE THINK THERE'S AN INTRUDER IN THE BASE.

WHAT?!

FOUR SENTRIES HAVE FAILED TO REPORT IN.

SOUND THE GENERAL CALL TO ARMS. I'LL SEE TO THIS MYSELF.

YES, SIR.

HEY, BEFORE I FORGET... *THANKS.*

FOR BEING HERE.

THANKS? FOR WHAT?

MADE MY JOB SO MUCH EASIER. OH...

...AND ONE MORE THING.

THANKS FOR THE DANCE!

KRAK

WHAT? WHAT IS THIS? WHO ARE YOU?

TKOK

SMP

I'M LUKE SKYWALKER. I'M HERE TO RESCUE YOU.

SORRY. WANTED TO SAY THAT SINCE I WAS SIX.

YUSEF KASSIM, I'M WITH U.S. ARMED FORCES. AND I'M GETTING YOU OUTTA HERE.

TZEE TZEE TZEE

PRAISE BE!

THE INTRUDER!
HE'S GOT THE PRISONER!
OPEN FIRE!
SON OF A--
TZEE-TZEE
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
PAK
PCHOW
PKOW
BRATTA ATTA BRITT
ALARM SYSTEM BUILT INTO YOUR MANACLES. WENT OFF WHEN WE LEFT THE ROOM!
STAY BEHIND ME!
PAKK
POK
OUT OF THE WAY! HE'S GOT SOME FORM OF ADVANCED BODY ARMOR!
THIS SHOULD DEAL WITH IT.
ARRH!!
KRAKOOM!!

MY LEGS-- THEY BLEW OFF MY--

NOOO!

NOW YA DONE IT! NOW I'M GONNA--

NOW WE'RE GONNA TEAR YA LIMB FROM LIMB!

ERKK

ARHH

GYEAH

PUNY WIMP555! PUT UP A FIGHT!

WHAT ARE YA? GUTLESS5?!

SLASH

SHRK

PTCHH

AHK-HKK

WHOOPS! WE GUESS YOU ARE--NOW!

MERCIFUL ALLAH. THE MAN IS INSANE.

ENOUGH! WHATEVER YOU ARE, YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY HERE FOR SHEIKH KASSIM. SO KNOW THIS--

--ONE PUSH OF THIS BUTTON, I DETONATE HIS RESTRAINTS...

AND THE *ONLY* WAY YOU'LL LEAVE WITH HIM--IS IN *PIECES*. DO YOU *UNDERSTAND?*

5SSSORRY. WE'RE JUST A BIG, DUMB JOCK.

GIVE USSS A SSSEC TO WRAP OUR HEAD AROUND IT.

YEARGHH!

YOU-- YOU'RE A MONSTER.

A CANNIBAL!

PTUH!

EHH--

WHAT? DOESN'T COUNT.

WE DIDN'T SsSWALLOW.

Shortly...

TEN CLICKS NORTH OF THE ULTIMATUM BASE.

ALL RIGHT, WE'RE ALL HERE. I CALL SHOTGUN.

NICELY DONE, CORPORAL.

HEY, THIS'S THE FLASH-MAN YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. MACKENZIE, WHERE'S THE CONTAINMENT POD?

WHAT?!

SORRY, MAN. MOBILE UNIT'S A BUST. COULDN'T GET IT RUNNING. YOU'LL HAVE TO HOLD IT TILL WE'RE BACK IN D.C.

HERE. AT LEAST I CAN GET *THESE* OFF. CAREFUL, LOOKS LIKE THERE'S AN EXPLOSIVE CHARGE.

THANK YOU.

KATE, WHAT ABOUT THE KILL SWITCH?

I'D... RATHER NOT.

I WASN'T ABLE TO MONITOR YOU EITHER--SAY, DID YOU HAVE AN EPISODE BACK THERE? DID YOU *VENOM-OUT?!*

KASSIM, YOU WERE THERE. DID YOU *SEE* ANYTHING?

I SAW--

--NOTHING LESS THAN A TRUE HERO. I OWE YOU MY LIFE, MY FRIEND.

YOU HEARD THE MAN. LET'S GO.

GENERAL, I CAN ONLY CONFIRM THAT 99% OF THE SYMBIOTE IS IN THAT TUBE.

I DON'T KNOW THE WHOLE STORY, SIR. THERE'S A GOOD HOUR WHERE I HAVE *NO* READINGS AT ALL ON THE ALIEN.

AND KASSIM MAY BE TALKING, BUT I CAN HEAR THAT HE'S NOT TELLING THE TRUTH.

GRRR

BRING IN THOMPSON.

Project: Rebirth HQ.

GOOD WORK, SOLDIER.

THANK YOU, GENERAL.

SO? 18 MISSIONS LEFT ON YOUR TOUR AS VENOM. HONESTLY NOW, SON. YOU STILL UP FOR IT?

YES, SIR. I'M IN.

FOR THE LONG HAUL.

SEE YOU AROUND, PARTNER.

I'LL BE HERE, THOMPSON.

ACTUALLY, KATE, I DON'T THINK HE WAS TALKING TO YOU.

Brooklyn.

WHERE WERE YOU?

BETTY? I WAS GONNA--

THE FUNERAL.

YOU MISSED MARLA'S FUNERAL. PEOPLE WERE ASKING ABOUT YOU.

SORRY. THE V.A. SENT ME AWAY LAST MINUTE FOR BUSINESS. I--

I DIDN'T EVEN GET A CHANCE TO TALK TO PETE.

FLASH, I ASKED YOU TO DO *ONE* THING.

I KNOW. I HAVEN'T BEEN A GOOD BOYFRIEND TO *YOU*...

...OR A BEST FRIEND TO PETER.

AND I *KNOW* HE'S SCREWIN' UP. KEEPIN' SECRETS.

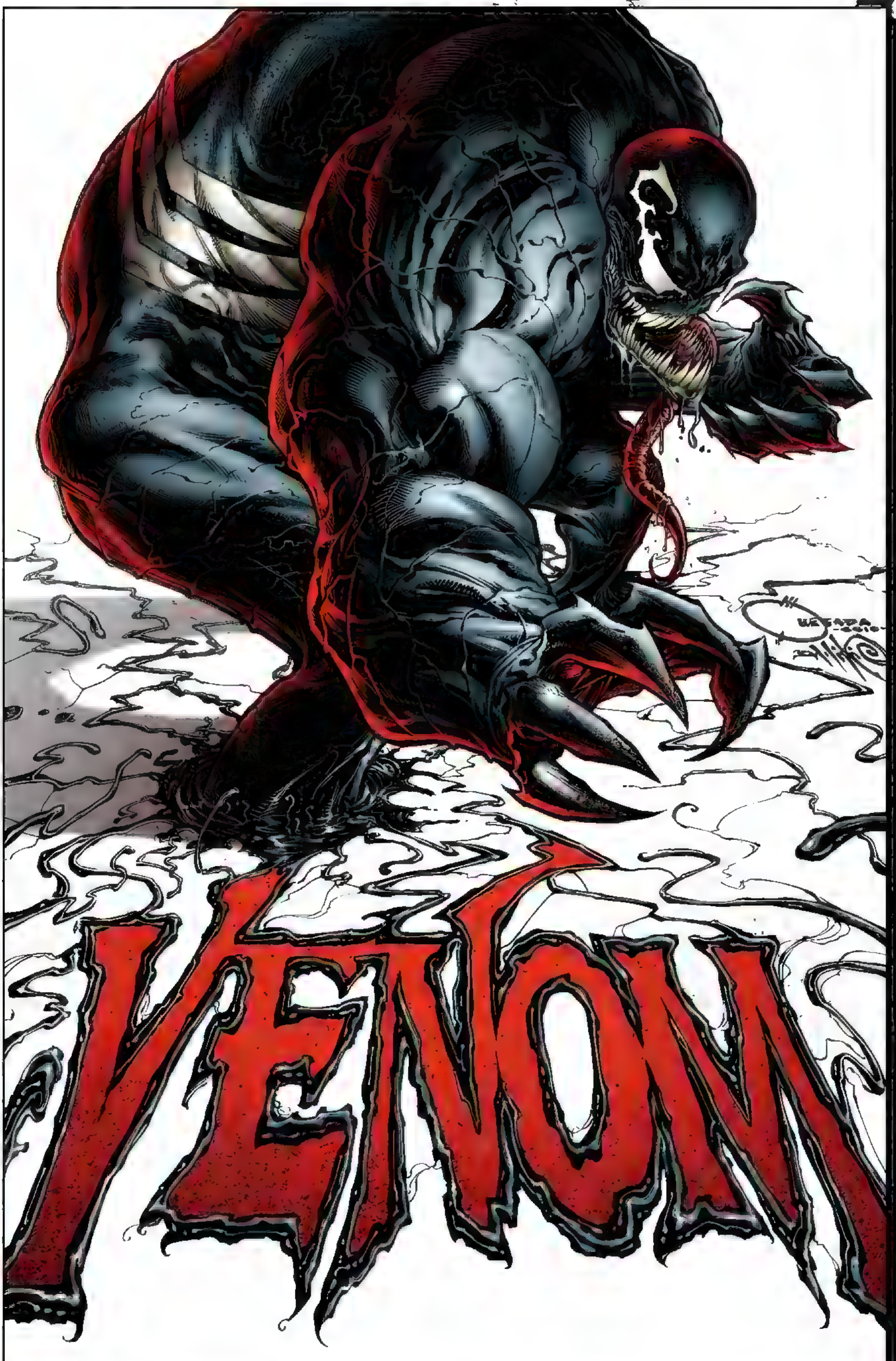
I DON'T WANNA BE THAT GUY, BETTS. I'LL DO BETTER.

PROMISE?

YEAH. PROMISE.

GOTTA HAVE A WORD WITH HIM. STUPID PARKER. THAT'S NO WAY TO LIVE.

HE'S GONNA RUIN EVERYTHING.



VENOM #1

Nrosvekistan, Eastern Europe.

<GO, JUKA! I AM TIRED...>

<COME, MAMA! *PLEASE!* WE MUST HURRY!>

<I CANNOT CONTINUE...>

EKLOSH

<THESE *MONSTERS* TOOK MY SANJA! I *WILL NOT* LOSE YOU, TOO!>

<DO NOT LET THEM BREAK YOUR SPIRIT-- *I BEG YOU!*>

<COME! PLEASE, HURRY!>

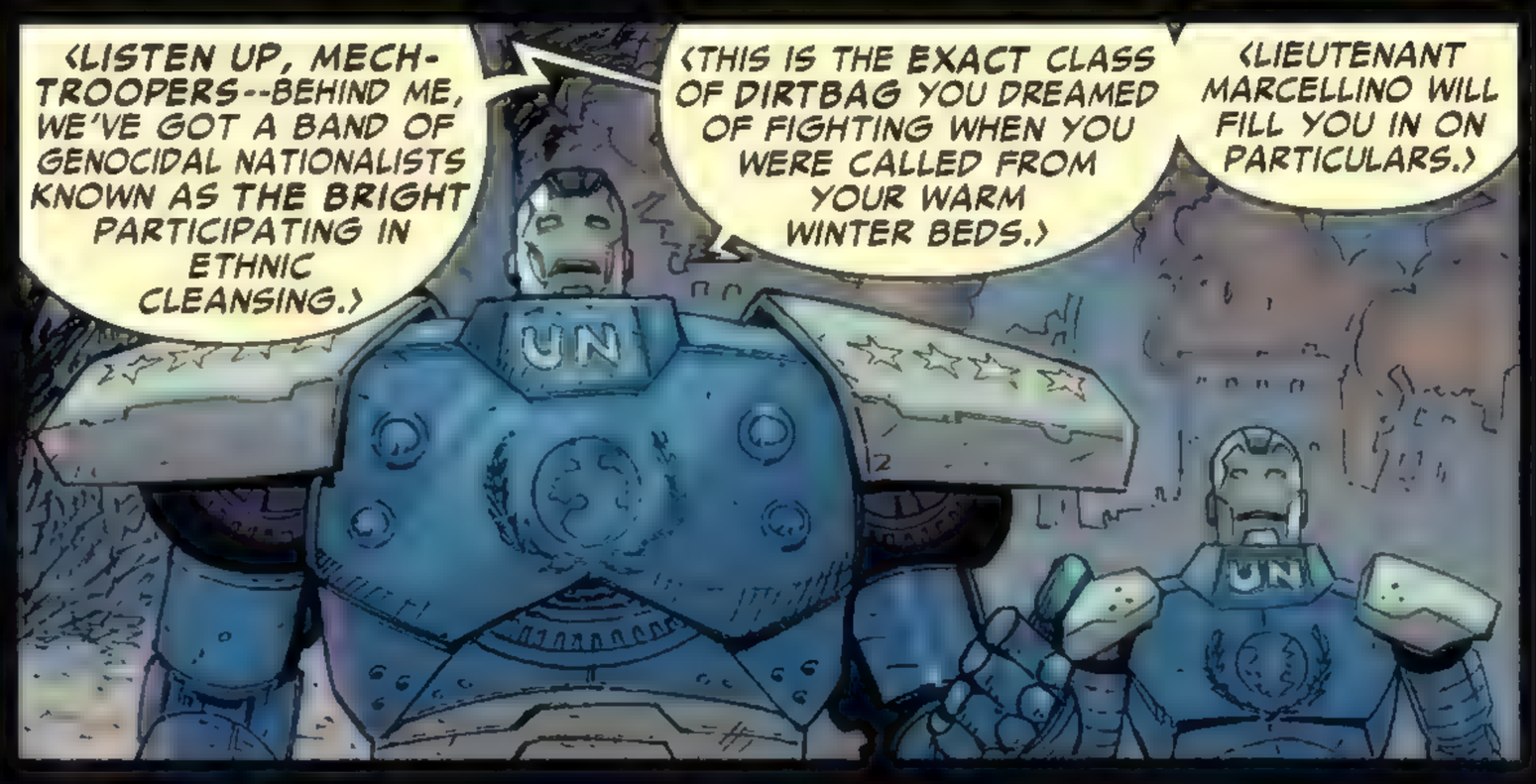
<JUKA, YOU STRUGGLE AGAINST THE INEVITABLE, MY SON...LEAVE ME...>

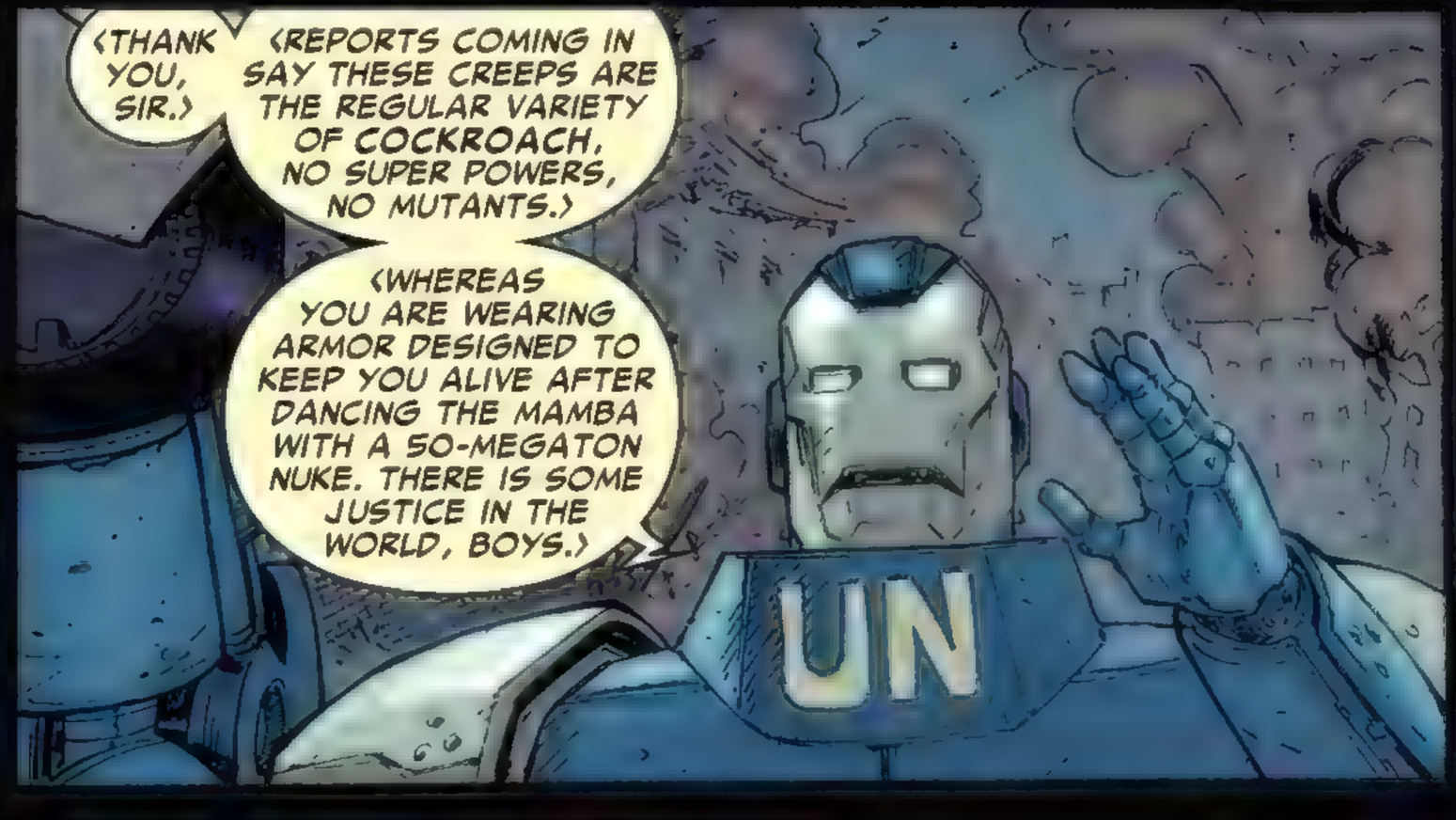
<LEAVE ME TO DIE...>

<NOT ON MY WATCH, MA'AM.>

‹TOM GORMIN, ELITE U.N. PEACEKEEPER.›
‹YOU'RE SAFE NOW. WE'RE GOING TO STOP THE MEN WHO DID THIS.›
‹W-WHO ARE YOU?›
UN
UN

‹NO, YOU WILL NOT! NOTHING CAN STOP THEM--YOU MUST FLEE OR YOU WILL DIE HERE!›
‹MY TRANSLATOR MUST BE BROKEN. SIR, WE'RE MEGA-CLASS MECH-TROOPERS POWERED BY STARK TECH AND TRAINED IN SUPERHUMAN COMBAT.›
‹WE WILL PROTECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. I PROMISE.›


‹LISTEN UP, MECH-TROOPERS--BEHIND ME, WE'VE GOT A BAND OF GENOCIDAL NATIONALISTS KNOWN AS THE BRIGHT PARTICIPATING IN ETHNIC CLEANSING.›
‹THIS IS THE EXACT CLASS OF DIRTBAG YOU DREAMED OF FIGHTING WHEN YOU WERE CALLED FROM YOUR WARM WINTER BEDS.›
‹LIEUTENANT MARCELLINO WILL FILL YOU IN ON PARTICULARS.›
UN
UN


‹THANK YOU, SIR.›
‹REPORTS COMING IN SAY THESE CREEPS ARE THE REGULAR VARIETY OF COCKROACH, NO SUPER POWERS, NO MUTANTS.›
‹WHEREAS YOU ARE WEARING ARMOR DESIGNED TO KEEP YOU ALIVE AFTER DANCING THE MAMBA WITH A 50-MEGATON NUKE. THERE IS SOME JUSTICE IN THE WORLD, BOYS.›
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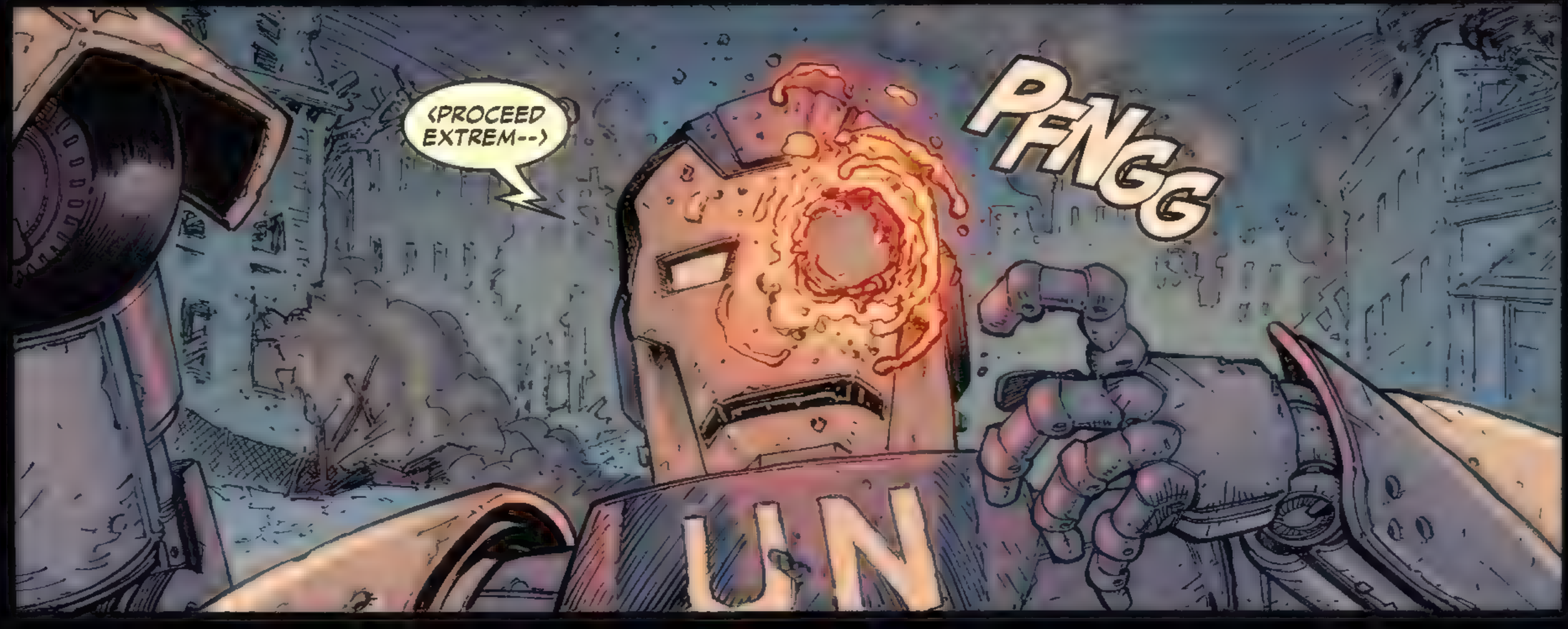

‹PROCEED EXTREM--›
PFNGG
UN

THWOOM

THP

GHAA-!

THP

THP

SHNK

SHNK

SHNK

<OUTLANDER 2, THIS IS PRIME, WE ARE--)

THP

PTNG

PTNG

GAAA!

THP

<+KOFF+ GA-GET T-THE... HELL OUT +KOFF+ DO YOU READ +KOFF+ SQUAD DOWN +HACK+>

HEARD YOU PROMISE THIS MAN YOU'D KEEP HIM AND HIS MAMA *SAFE*...

SHOULDN'T MAKE PROMISES YOU CAN'T KEEP.

REAL FAUX PAS.

I HATE TO GIVE TREATS TO BAD BOYS WHO HAVEN'T EARNED IT...

BUT THAT IS *SUCH* AN ADORABLE TIN-MAN COSTUME.

<P-PLEASE.. STOP...>

FSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

GHRAKGH--!!

JACK, WHY ARE YOU FILMING THIS? I DON'T WANT TO LOOK AT THIS.

JUST ENJOYING THE FLAVORS OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, DADDY-O. *BOILING* AND *SCOOPING* THE BRAINS OF EXOTIC PEOPLE IN STRANGE LANDS.

THIS ISN'T A PLEASURE MISSION. GET OUT THERE AND FILM THESE BULLETS AT WORK, PLEASE.

YOU KNOW, DOC EKMECIC MIGHT'VE SCREWED YOU, BUT YOU GOTTA RESPECT HIS MOTIVES. THAT'S *QUALITY MURDERING.*

THE STUFF *WORKS.* CUT THROUGH THESE U.N. PIGS LIKE NOTHING.

YES, *ANTARCTIC VIBRANIUM* MELTS THROUGH ANY OTHER METAL.

WHEN YOU FURNISHED DOC EKMECIC WITH SUCH A LARGE QUANTITY OF IT I THOUGHT, WELL, I THOUGHT YOU'D--AND DON'T GET UPSET--I THOUGHT YOU'D GONE A BIT SILLY, POPS.

BUT, LOOKIE HERE, YOU WERE RIGHT AS RAIN--*HE DID IT!* THE OL' KOOT FOUND A WAY TO *WEAPONIZE* IT.

UNFORTUNATELY, UPON HIS SUCCESS, THE DOCTOR AND HIS CLAN OF BIGOTS USED MY BULLETS FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES, TO FIGHT THEIR OWN WAR.

AIN'T ALL BAD.

THE DOCTOR'S GIVEN US WORLDWIDE ADVERTISING.

FREE AT THAT.

UNTIL YOU ACQUIRE THE DOCTOR AND HIS METHOD OF WEAPONIZING MY VIBRANIUM, WE HAVE *NO PRODUCT* TO EXPLOIT THIS *FORTUITOUS* SCENARIO.

RIGHT, FIND THE DOCTOR-FIND THE DOCTOR-FIND THE DOCTOR, I KNOW, BUT HE'S SORT OF IN A **WAR ZONE.**

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO FIND HIM, REALLY?

MAYBE HE'S ROLLING AROUND IN SOME GIANT MAD SCIENTIST VEHICLE WITH *BRAINS* MOUNTED IN A JAR, A NEON SIGN OVERHEAD, AND A *SPOTLIGHT* TRAINED ON HIM TO HELP ME...

I BELIEVE THAT IS YOUR NEON SIGN. FERID EKMECIC WILL BE INSIDE.

CLOWN'S ROLLING AROUND IN A *GIANT TANK* MADE OF *VIBRANIUM*, WILDLY INCONSPICUOUS.

SCOOP UP THE OLD DUCK AN' BE BACK HOME IN TIME TO KILL A HOOKER.

HOLD ON, THERE'S A HELICOPTER BRINGING SOME NEW KIDS TO THE PLAYGROUND.

TAKE YOUR PLEASURE, BOY, BUT DO NOT FORGET WHAT IT IS FOR.

SOCIETY IS *UNNATURAL* AND ONLY MAINTAINABLE THROUGH *TYRANNICAL FORCE.*

WE ARM THE WEAK SO THEY MIGHT *RISE UP* AND FURTHER THE AGENDA OF *CHAOS.*

WHY DO WE DESIRE CHAOS?

A CHAOTIC WORLD NEEDS MORE WEAPONS, WHICH *HAPPENS* TO BE THE BUSINESS WE ARE IN.

ISN'T IT WONDERFULLY CONVENIENT HOW OUR **ETHICAL** AND **PHILOSOPHICAL** PERSPECTIVE MATCH OUR FINANCIAL PLANS SO PERFECTLY?

GOD BLESS CAPITALISM.

THEY SAY MY COUNTRY'S BEST DAYS ARE BEHIND HER.

THAT WE'VE LOST OUR WAY.

THEY SAY WE'VE BECOME ENGORGED.

DEPENDENT.

GAA--

AN IMPERIALISTIC NATION INTENT ONLY ON MAKING ITSELF RICHER.

WHAA--!!

THEY FIXATE ON THE EXCEPTIONS.

THWIP

MY NAME IS EUGENE "FLASH" THOMPSON, CORPORAL IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

I SURE AS HELL BELIEVE IN MY COUNTRY.

SKWUDD

MY BELIEF IN HER IS WHY I AM HERE, THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM HOME, PROTECTING THE LIVES OF STRANGERS.

VENOM!

YOUR TARGET, DOCTOR FERID EKMECIC, IS WITHIN THE LARGE TANK TO YOUR NORTH.

TARGET MUST BE BROUGHT IN ALIVE.

THESE AREN'T TRITE PRINCIPLES TO ME.

TARGET WILL HAVE TO WAIT.

CIVILIAN POPULATION UNDER ATTACK.

GRA--

I GAVE MY LEGS FOR THESE IDEALS.

AND NOW I RISK WEARIN' THIS *DAMNED* SUIT FOR 'EM.

<PLEASE... N-NOT MY SON...>

THE SYMBIOTE I WEAR IS AN ALIEN OF GREAT POWER AND UNKNOWN ORIGIN.

PNG

THING CONSTANTLY SEEKS TO BOND ITSELF TO ME.

SHLKK

SHKK

GLNKK

MY TIME IN THE SUIT IS LIMITED TO 48 HOURS.

LONGER THAN THAT, THEY SAY, AND THE BONDING BECOMES PERMANENT.

SHOULD I LOSE CONTROL TO THE SYMBIOTE...

COMMAND HAS INSERTED A *KILL SWITCH*.

BLAM

BLAM

PNG

PNG

PNG

BLAM

AIN'T THAT LUCKY?

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
PNG
PNG
PNG
THUPP
THE THREAT OF BEIN' BLOWN TO HELL KEEPS A MAN'S HEAD IN THE GAME.
NO PIN HANDY.
PLUG IT-- BRING IT WITH.
RUNNIN' AROUND WITH A LIVE GRENADE INSIDE MY ARMOR...
NICE WORK, THOMPSON...
...THE MISSION'S OFF TO A BRILLIANT START.
PNG
PNG
THE SCUM I'M HUNTING IS AN ARMS DEALER.
HE'S BEEN SELLING POWERFUL AND INEXPENSIVE WEAPONS TO TERRORISTS, DICTATORS AND MASKED VILLAINS.
THIS PIECE OF DIRT WOULD SET THE WORLD ON FIRE FOR A PRICE.
PNG
HIS WEAPONS CAUSED THIS NIGHTMARE ALL AROUND ME.
SPT

IF I CAN'T STOP THIS MAN, WAR WILL SPREAD.

BLAM BLAM

BLAM BLAM

BLAM

BRAKKA BRAKKA

BLAM

BLAM

SPT SPT

MORE INNOCENTS WILL SUFFER.

SO I'M HERE.

GLADOOOOOM

IN THIS DARK PLACE.

BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA

MESAR

MESA

FAR FROM HOME.

KKRASH

TO MAKE SURE THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN.

THP

THP

THP

THP

WHAT THE HELL AM I LOOKING AT?! WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!

NO IDEA, SIR. WE'LL GET SOME MEN ON-- GHA!!

ERIK! RESPOND! WHAT HAS GOTTEN INTO YOU?!

WRREENNNCHHHH

HE CAUGHT A DOSE OF VENOM, DOCTOR EKMECIC.

I'M EMBARRASSED AS SOON AS IT COMES OUT OF MY MOUTH.

RELEASE ME! YOU HAVE NO RIGHTS HERE-- THIS IS MY NATION!!

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW LUCKY YOU ARE WE NEED YOU ALIVE.

NOW THAT IS ONE SPECTACULAR COSTUME.

WHAT--?

GHRAA--

FIRST YOU GET A TRICK--

--THEN THE TREAT!

-HRNK-

I'D HAVE IMAGINED, BEING A GENOCIDAL MANIAC, YOU'D BE LEFT OUT OF ALL MANNER OF *SOIREES*--BUT LOOK AT YOU, YOU'RE THE BELLE OF THE BALL TONIGHT, SWEET SISTER PUREBLOOD.

GAA--!

BEING SOMETHING OF A MANIAC MYSELF, WITH THE *NOM DE GUERRE* **JACK O' LANTERN**, AND MY LEGENDARY FONDNESS FOR HOLLOWING OUT FOLKS' BRAINS, WELL, EVERYTHING ABOUT ME TENDS TO BE *OFF-PUTTING* TO THE *BOURGEOIS*.

W-WHO SENT YOU?

YOU *KNOW* WHO SENT ME.

DAMMIT! TWISTED UP--

--CAN'T LOSE HIM--

--THINK--

GOT IT!

THERE'S ALWAYS AN OPENING--

--FOR FLASH'S FAMOUS HAIL MARY PASS.

BLADOOOOOOM

YHRAA--

OPERATIVE VENOM--I NEED YOU TO CALM DOWN.

YOUR ANGER IS OUT OF CONTROL, YOU'RE REDLINING.

YEAH, YEAH.

IF YOU DO NOT CALM DOWN THE SYMBIOTE WILL TAKE OVER.

I READ YOU.

CALM BLUE OCEAN, CALM BLUE OCEAN.

<PLEASE, YOU MUST TAKE MY ADRIAN TO SAFETY!>

AGENT VENOM, THE CIVILIANS HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF SURVIVAL OUTSIDE OF YOUR COMPANY. HELP THEM FIND COVER, U.N. TROOPS EN ROUTE.

NEGATIVE!

ZONE IS TOO HOT. GOING TO GET THEM OUT.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE GRAVITY OF THIS DECISION?

IF THAT DOCTOR'S RECIPE FOR WEAPONIZED ANTARCTIC VIBRANIUM IS DELIVERED TO OUR TARGET--

GLOBAL DESTABILIZATION-- I WAS AT THE DEBRIEFING.

THIS WOMAN AND HER SON WON'T LAST FIVE MINUTES WITHOUT ME-- SO I'M GETTING THEM OUT.

BE DAMNED CLEAR, IF YOU'RE TAKING CHARGE OF EVACUATING THOSE PEOPLE--

--THEIR LIVES ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

AT FIRST COCK-CROW THE GHOSTS MUST GO--

SINKK

BACK TO THEIR QUIET GRAVES BELOW!

DISTRACTED--

IDIOT--

--ALMOST KILLED HER--

THUDD

WOMAN AND HER CHILD-- TERRIFIED--

SONOFABITCH DOESN'T CARE--

GO! GET AWAY FROM HERE!

MAY JACK-O-LANTERNS BURNING BRIGHT OF SOFT AND GOLDEN HUE--

--PIERCE THROUGH THE FUTURE'S VEIL TO SHOW--

YERAGHH!!

WHAT FATE NOW HOLDS FOR YOU!!

AGENT VENOM, CALM DOWN.

YOU'RE LOSING CONTROL!

NOOO--

THWIP

THWIP

OOF--

THWAKK

WWE ARE FINALLY IN CONTROL!

KILL HIM

NO-- CALM--

HOW MANY MOTHERS--

CALM DOWN-- STOP--

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE HERE FOR.

WWHAT ARE WEE HERE FOR?!

TWUDD

YOU WANT ME TO KILL YOU.

AND I'M GONNA.

HOW MANY CHILDREN--

--SEVEN WAYS TO GET OUT OF THIS--

SYMBIOTE WON'T DO AS TOLD--

I'M STRONG, HUH? RIGHT?!

A BIG, STRONG BOY!

GHRAGHHRHH--

--HAIL MARY PLAN--

--MAKES TRAVELING WITH A LIVE GRENADE--

GAKK--

SKRUKK

--SEEM PRETTY SMART IN HINDSIGHT.

WOOOM

WHATEVER HE'S JUICED UP ON...

...LOSING HIS JAW DOWNGRADES HIS MOOD.

GAKK-- RHAKK ⊰KOFF⊱ ⊰KOFF⊱ GAA-- ⊰HACK⊱

<NO! PLEASE!>

ZWOOOOOSH

FREAK IS PERSISTENT.

WHOOSH

FACE HALF BLOWN OFF--

HIS *MIND'S* STILL ON HIS MISSION.

SO'S MINE.

THWIP

KRTTCHH

TARGET IS DOWN. AGENT VENOM, REGAIN YOUR COMPOSURE AND PREPARE FOR EVACUATION.

MISSION IS A SCRUB.

WE...WE-- I...I CAN THINK OF AT LEAST...TWO PEOPLE LIKELY TO DISAGREE WITH YOU.

POINT TAKEN, SOLDIER. BUT NOT EVERYONE'S GOING TO SEE THIS CUP AS HALF FULL.

PLEASING THE SUPERIORS ISN'T MY OBJECTIVE, KATHERINE.

WELL, GOOD THING THAT, AGENT VENOM...

"...BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T."

GET THE SUIT OFF OF THE BOY!

NEED TO HAVE WORDS WITH THAT IDIOT AND I DON'T WANT HIM LOSING CONTROL AND *KILLING* ME.

SIR, I ASSURE YOU, THERE IS *NOTHING* TO WORRY ABOUT.

CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG, BUT THE *LAST* TIME YOU ASSURED ME OF SOMETHING, IT WAS IN REGARDS TO MY REQUEST YOU BRING ME THAT TERRORIST WEAPONS-MAKER WHOSE SPINE YOU *SNAPPED*.

ADDING UP YOUR ASSURANCES LEADS ME TO ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION, CORPORAL THOMPSON.

SKREEEE

I'M NOT THE SCREAMING TYPE, SON.

I'M NOT YOUR FOOTBALL COACH. I'M NOT HERE TO MOTIVATE YOU TO WIN SOME GAME.

BUT MAYBE I SHOULD SHED SOME LIGHT ON THE SEVERITY OF THINGS.

I HAD TO *KILL* THE LAST SOLDIER OCCUPIED THAT SUIT.

MAN LOST CONTROL, JUST A BIT LONGER THAN YOU DID OUT THERE TODAY.

IS THIS SUPPOSED TO FRIGHTEN ME?

IT *OUGHTA* DO THAT. ONE HOUR AGO I SAT WITH MY FINGER ON THAT VERY SAME BUTTON, CORPORAL.

YOU WERE *INCHES* AWAY FROM THE END OF YOUR LIFE BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T KEEP YOUR TEMPER UNDER CONTROL.

I NEED YOU TO KILL THAT HIGH SCHOOL BOY JOCK BRAGGART WHO CRAWLED UP YOUR TAIL END.

HE IS COMPROMISING *MY* MISSION.

THEN I NEED CORPORAL EUGENE THOMPSON, THE *WAR HERO*, TO BEGIN A REGIMEN OF TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION.

THIS MISSION IS VOLATILE; I NEED MY PRIMARY TO HAVE HIS TEMPERAMENT UNDER CONTROL.

GO HOME, SON. GET SOME R AND R. GET SOME DISTANCE FROM THAT BEAST YOU'VE BEEN CARRYING AROUND.

BUT I NEED FOR US TO BE *ABSOLUTELY* CLEAR--

YOU EVER LET THAT ALPHA-JOCK BRUTE ANGER SULLY *MY "OPERATION VENOM"* AGAIN, I WILL *CUT YOU* OFF THE TEAM FASTER THAN A *MOHEL*.

Brooklyn.

HEY, GLORY, IS BETTY AROUND...?

BEEN CALLING FOR THE PAST HOUR, BETTY TURNED OFF HER PHONE...

PROBABLY A GOOD REASON FOR THAT, THOMPSON. ANYTHING COME TO MIND?

NOT REALLY.

YOU'RE *SIX HOURS* LATE, THOMPSON. SHE'S BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

OH, MAN! THE *V.A. BENEFIT!*

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

I-I, UM... WELL, FILLING OUT DONATOR THANK-YOU LETTERS FOR THE V.A. OFFICE...

MY EX-HUSBAND GAVE ME *PLENTY* OF EXPERIENCE DETECTING LIES, SNIFFING OUT A SECRET LIFE--I WILL *NEVER* PUT UP WITH THAT AGAIN.

YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING. THE BAGS UNDER YOUR EYES, GONE FOR DAYS AT A TIME, IT ALL ADDS UP TO *ONE THING*--

YOU'RE DRINKING AGAIN.

HOW COULD YOU THINK THAT, AFTER EVERYTHING--?

SERIOUSLY, FLASH?

HOW COULD I *NOT* THINK IT?

SLAM

MY NAME IS EUGENE "FLASH" THOMPSON.

I'M AN ALCOHOLIC.

OLD MAN WAS A DRINKER, TOO.

GAVE ME A CONCUSSION WITH A MICKEY'S BIG MOUTH ON MY ELEVENTH BIRTHDAY.

HE USED TO SAY, "WHERE GOD WANTS YOU, HE'LL MAKE A WAY."

WHEELCHAIR RAMP TO A PINT.

"WHERE GOD WANTS YOU, HE'LL MAKE A WAY."

Alcoholics Anonymous MEETING TONIGHT!

I BET THE OL' BASTARD'D THINK THOSE STAIRS ARE PRETTY DAMNED FUNNY.

"Bad temper is its own scourge.

"Few things are more bitter than to feel bitter.

"A man's venom poisons himself more than his victim."
– Charles Buxton

VENOM #2

I WAS YOUNG WHEN MOTHER WENT MAD.

FEARING HER MADNESS HEREDITARY, I FLED.

TO THE DARK PLANES.

TO THE HUNT.

BY THE TIME NEWS OF MOTHER'S PASSING REACHED ME, I WAS BEYOND THE WEAKNESS OF GRIEVING.

STILL-- HER GHOST HAUNTED.

IT DROVE ME DEEPER INTO THE WILDERNESS.

FLEEING HER MADNESS.

I CONQUERED THE SAVAGE JUNGLE--

--THE ACRID DESERT--

--THE DEEP WOOD.

I COULD NOT ESCAPE IT--

MOTHER'S MADNESS FOUND ME.

WITH IT, VISIONS.

THE VISIONS LEAD ME TO MY TRUE ADVERSARY--

AND I HUMBLED IT.

AND I BURIED IT.

WITH MY FAMILY'S HONOR RECLAIMED, I FOLLOWED MOTHER--

--A GUN IN MY MOUTH.

BUT MY ADVERSARY WOULD NOT HAVE ME AT PEACE.

EVERY SPIRIT HAS A DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSITE ESSENCE IT MUST HUNT--

--AND BE HUNTED BY.

SHNKK

GHA--

ONLY DEATH AT THE HANDS OF ONE'S ANTITHESIS CAN BRING LASTING PEACE--

ONLY THE SPIDER'S VENOM CAN BRING REST TO...

...KRAVEN THE HUNTER.

THE DRUMS-- DEAFENING!

NOT DRUMS-- MY HEART--

POISONED-- AUDITORY HALLUCINATIONS--

KRAKK

KRTCHH

--SPREADING HIS VENOM.

WOOSHH

RUN.

HOW MANY DAYS HERE?

PANICKED ANXIETY-- POISONED--

RUN.

THWIP

--KEEP IT TOGETHER--

RUN.

REMEMBER BETTY.

SHE DOESN'T DESERVE THIS.

SCHOPP

DAMNED DRUMS--

--SO LOUD--

KQURK!!

NO--NOT DRUMS--

POISON.

SKRAWKK!

SHUKK

NOT A MAN--WILD BEAST--

RUN.

SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.

THWUDD

RHRAHH!

SGUNK

THE DAMNED DRUMS--

--GIVE ANYTHING--

THE FETID HEART TAKES PHYSICAL FORM--

--MAKE THEM STOP--

THAT KRAVEN MIGHT MAKE IT BLEED!

SHRUNKK

GRWWAAAKK--!

JUST A MAN--

RUN.

THWOKK

--FOCUS--

SKRAK

DO NOT LEAVE BETTY WITH THIS.

YOU HAVE FAILED ME, SPIDER.

HOPELESS--

NO.

ONE HOPE--

BLAM

RUN.

DON'T LEAVE BETTY TO BURY ANOTHER LIAR.

WEBBING FROM THIS HEIGHT--

RISK OF DISLOCATING SHOULDER-- OR WORSE--

THWIPP

TEARING AN ARM OFF.

THE SYMBIOTE HOLDS.

DOESN'T EVEN HURT.

BUT THAT COMES.

THWUMPP

OOF--

STAY AWAKE...

...CAN'T...

CAN'T... LEAVE...

BLESS YOU, SPIDER.

YOU MAY DELIVER ME YET.

CAN'T...

...LEAVE...

...CAN'T LEAVE BETTY WITH THIS.

YOU KNOW, I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS POSSIBLE TO BURN SOUP THAT BADLY, PETE.

IT'S ACTUALLY PRETTY IMPRESSIVE IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT.

A REAL HIGH-WATER MARK FOR YOU.

HOT-WATER MARK.

+SNIFF+

WHOA, HEY! I'M SORRY, I KNOW I SCREWED UP DINNER BUT IT WASN'T LIKE I POISONED YOU...

+SOB+ NO... IT'S NOTHING... WE CAN TALK LATER... I KNOW YOU HAVE THINGS TO GO DO.

C'MON, WHAT'S GOING ON, BETTY? YOU AND FLASH BREAK UP AGAIN?

"ARE YOU KIDDING? BREAKING UP WOULD BE TOO EASY.

"FLASH PREFERS TO JUST IGNORE ME, GONE FOR DAYS AT A TIME WITH NO WORD."

THOSE FUNDRAISING TOURS FOR THE V.A.--

NO. NO MORE EXCUSES.

FLASH LACKS THE BASIC DECENCY TO FACE HIS PROBLEMS HEAD ON...

"...HE'D PREFER TO LET THINGS DIE SLOW AND PAINFULLY."

HE'S OSCILLATED BETWEEN *HERO* AND *JERK* ENOUGH TIMES--I'M DONE BEING SURPRISED WHEN THE PENDULUM SWINGS.

THERE'S AN EXPLANATION. HE'S SUCH A DIFFERENT PERSON NOW...

NO, HE'S THE *SAME* PERSON...

"...ALWAYS RUNNING FROM SOMETHING."

I DON'T ASK FOR MUCH, PETE. I DON'T.

I DON'T NEED SHINY EXPENSIVE THINGS, OR DOORS HELD OPEN, OR DOTING...

I JUST NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO AT THE END OF THE DAY.

AND IF IT *ISN'T* GOING TO BE HIM, I NEED TO GET ON WITH MY LIFE.

I WOULDN'T QUIT ON FLASH YET; HE ISN'T THE SAME PERSON WE GREW UP WITH.

GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO DO THE RIGHT THING--*HE'LL DO IT.*

I DON'T KNOW, PETE...

"...FLASH THOMPSON MIGHT BE THE GUY YOU'D WANT WATCHING YOUR BACK IN A FIGHT...

"...BUT WHEN IT COMES TO FACING REAL LIFE...

"...HE'S THE LAST GUY *ANYONE* SHOULD RELY ON."

NO-!!

HOW THE HELL DID I GET HERE? WHERE--

SAVAGE LAND-- AIRDROPPED-- *CALM DOWN.*

KRAVEN HUNTING ME--FOR DAYS NOW--FELL-- PASSED OUT--

SYMBIOTE-- MUST'VE TAKEN CONTROL-- BROUGHT US IN HERE.

BONDED FOR TOO LONG--

NO GOOD.

DODGE SENT ME TO DESTROY ANTARCTIC VIBRANIUM MINING FACILITY--

SIDETRACK WITH KRAVEN-- COSTING ME THE MISSION--

SLUPP

GHRKK--

COST ME A LOT MORE IF I DON'T GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

TWO DAYS WEARING THE SYMBIOTE--WAAAY PAST SAFE THRESHOLD.

KRAVEN'S STILL OUT THERE.

HAVE TO GET THIS THING OFF.

BE HERE SOON--

COMM IS SHATTERED. KATHERINE WON'T KNOW THE SITUATION.

AT LEAST SHE DIDN'T ACTIVATE FAIL-SAFE.

TRUSTS ME ENOUGH NOT TO BLOW ME UP...YET.

GET TO THE MINE--

STOP THE SHIPMENT-- TIME STILL--

HE'LL BE HUNTING.

ONE BULLET LEFT.

IN CASE THE SYMBIOTE TAKES ME--IN CASE I HAVE TO--

NO.

WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

BETTY CAN'T BURY ANOTHER LIAR.

KRAVEN-- *NOT MY MISSION*--NOT MY PROBLEM.

KEEP IT SIMPLE, SOLDIER.

BLOW THE MINE.

GET OUT ALIVE.

HOME TO BETTY.

LEAVING HIM OUT THERE.

THIS LUNATIC, HUNTING GOD-KNOWS-WHO NEXT.

A LAND MINE FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO TRIP.

NOT MY PROBLEM.

I HAVE THE POWER TO TAKE HIM DOWN.

MAKES HIM MY PROBLEM--

MY RESPONSIBILITY.

CAN'T TURN MY BACK ON THIS.

CAN'T RUN.

NOT HELPLESS. NOT PREY.

NOT FLASH THOMPSON, DISABLED VET--

YOU'RE VENOM.

YOU HAVE TO TAKE THIS LUNATIC DOWN--

--YOU HAVE TO *KILL* KRAVEN THE...

HUNTER.

SPIDER.

I HAVE SHOWN MUCH *LOVE* FOR YOU.

HIS EYES--

VACANT--

MUCH DEVOTION!

KRAKK

GHA--!

GEEKED OUT ON VOODOO DUST--

GIVE ME WHAT I DESIRE!

ONE FINAL EMBRACE, MY DEAR SPIDER.

OOF--

LUNATIC WANTS AN EMBRACE.

I'LL EMBRACE HIM ALL RIGHT...

--JUST NOT IN A DOOM-CAVE FULL OF GIANT BAD-LUCK-BATS.

BATS USE *SONAR* TO SEE.

SONICS MAKE MY SYMBIOTE *VERY* UNHAPPY.

GO.

LAST PLACE YOU WANT THIS FIGHT.

GET THROUGH--GET OUT BEFORE HE FINDS YOU.

GET OUT BEFORE--

IT IS TIME.

THE HUNT IS OVER.

LET US DIE TOGET--

THWAP

SHUT UP THE CRAZY TALK.

STAY CALM--

ANXIETY LEADS TO FEAR.

FEAR LEADS TO ANGER.

GET ANGRY--

--LOSE CONTROL--

--AND THE SYMBIOTE TAKES ME.

YES, THERE IT IS--I FEEL YOUR RAGE!

JOYOUSLY ENTER OUR FINAL EMBRACE, DEAR SPIDER--

TONIGHT WE DIE!!

FASTER THAN EYES TRACK--

A BLUR OF MOTION--

DON'T THINK--

--MOVE ON INSTINCT--

GAH!

PREDICT HIS MOVES.

THWIPP

THEN GIVE CRAZY WHAT HE WANTS--

SHLNKK

YHERGAGHH!!

HE WAILS--

IT'S A GOOD SOUND.

THE BATS WAKING UP ISN'T.

SKREEEEEEEE

SKREEEEEEE

YERAGHH!!

SHORT-SIGHTED--

--COSTS ME--

SKREEEEEEE

SYMBIOTE'S AGONY--

--REVERBERATING THROUGH MY SKULL--

YERAGHAGHR!!

SO MUCH PAIN-- CAN'T BLAME IT FOR ABANDONING ME.

THE DEMON'S TRUE FORM.

THE SPIDER'S BLACK SPIRIT FLEES YOU.

TAKE YOU WITHOUT IT.

GIVE ME A KNIFE, EVEN THINGS UP--I'LL KILL YOU.

GIVE YOU WHAT YOU WANT.

NO. YOU HAVE FAILED ME. FAILED TO SAVE ME.

YOU ARE A FRAUD.

ONE BULLET LEFT--

KEEP CRAZY RANTING-- GET THE GUN--

A "CRIPPLE" WHOLLY UNWORTHY TO KILL A KRAVINOFF.

WORD IS YOU *NUTS* DO A PRETTY GOOD JOB *KILLING YOURSELVES.*

FOR DISHONORING MY NAME YOU WILL *BLEED TO DEATH,* SLOWLY. YOU WILL--

GHAA

THE BAD-LUCK-BATS FIGURE THEY OWE ME ONE.

PROBABLY THEY'RE LOOKING FOR DINNER.

SONOFA--

GET OUT OF THIS OR I'M GONNA FIND OUT.

ANOTHER FEW SECONDS I'LL BE TOO HIGH TO FALL--

--NOW OR NEVER--

--HAIL MARY SHOT INTO ITS BRAIN--

WORTHY OF A ZAPRUDER HOME VIDEO.

SKRAKK--

BLAM!

BUYS MY FREEDOM--

--AND A THIRTY-FOOT FALL.

TWUDD

GHA!

MAYBE HE'S NOT SUCH A BAD GUY AFTER ALL.

AS CRAP AS THAT WAS I TAKE COMFORT IN FACT--

IT'S GOING TO BE A *WHOLE LOT* WORSE FOR CRAZY KRAVEN BATFOODINOFF.

CAN'T KEEP THIS UP.

GET HOME TO BETTY. TELL HER *EVERYTHING*.

NO MORE SECRETS.

AS LONG AS I HAVE *BETTY*-- NOTHING ELSE MATTERS.

SUIT WAS *POISON*, BETTER THAT IT NOT--

COME BACK?

IMPOSSIBLE! THING WAS FREE-- WHY DID IT--?

SOOTHING VOICE--A *FRIEND'S* VOICE.

NO SECRETS-- ADMITS IT NEEDS ME.

KNOWS I NEED IT.

PROMISES IT WILL *NEVER* ABANDON ME.

ALWAYS THERE WHEN I NEED IT.

REMINDS ME WE HAVE A *MISSION*.

IF WE DON'T STOP THE *ANTARCTIC VIBRANIUM* FROM SHIPPING, HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS WILL *DIE*.

REMINDS ME WE *NEVER* HAVE TO RUN OR BE AFRAID OF ANYTHING AGAIN.

AS LONG AS WE'RE *TOGETHER*.

Elsewhere.

Army

Thompson, Eugene "Flash"

E4 CPL

THERE WE HAVE HIM.

NO MORE SECRETS.

IS THERE ANYONE I KNOW, ANY GOOD BOY, WHO WANTS TO SAVE PAPA A LOT OF MONEY AND DEAL WITH A SCHOOLYARD BULLY?

JACK O' LANTERN?

KILLING A BULLY?

OH, PICK ME! PICK ME!

VENOM #3
"WEB OF DEATH!"

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT YOU, MISS BRANT?

W-WHO'S THERE?!

WHEN YOU'RE NOT AROUND...

DO YOU EVER WONDER WHAT THEY SAY BEHIND YOUR BACK?

SKKKRTCHH

W-WHAT-- WHAT DO YOU WANT--?

WHEN YOUR *"FRIENDS"* THINK THEY CAN SPEAK WITH IMPUNITY...

THEY GIGGLE AND THEY WHISPER...

REVELING IN THE *DECADENT* QUESTION ON ALL THEIR MINDS...

HOW *DOES* BETTY LOVE THAT *LEGLESS* DRUNK?

AAUGEEEE!

GENERAL DODGE, AGENT VENOM'S BEEN RADIO SILENT FOR *THREE DAYS*, SIR.

Project Rebirth

HE'S LOST IN THE SAVAGE LAND AND 24 HOURS PAST THE POINT OF PERMANENT INTERCONNECTION WITH THE SYMBIOTE.

I RECOMMEND WE EXERCISE OUR FAIL-SAFE AND DETONATE AGENT THOMPSON BY REMOTE CONTROL.

TWKK

KATHERINE, THE ODDS THAT HE COULD STILL HAVE CONTROL OF THE SUIT...

SOMETHING OF A LONG-SHOT?

TWKK

DO NOT DETONATE. WE NEED AGENT VENOM TO DESTROY THAT SHIPMENT OF ANTARCTIC VIBRANIUM.

IF HE FAILS, WE'RE ALL IN FOR A *BAD* FEW YEARS.

HAVE FAITH...

"...OUR BOY WILL KEEP HIMSELF UNDER CONTROL."

I'M LOSING CONTROL.

SUIT'S RESISTING ALL COMMANDS--

BLAM BLAM

POW

POW POW

SIDETRACK WITH *KRAVEN*--

--COST ME DAYS.

VIBRANIUM SHIPMENT SET TO GO--

GAKK--

SKRUKK

MEMORY GOING SPOTTY--

DID I KILL ALL THESE MEN?

NOT MEN--

--TERRORISTS--

GHRAA--

--DEALING IN UNSTOPPABLE BULLETS.

THEY DESERVE THIS.

SHRUKK

BOOOM

MERCENARIES.

THEIR BUSINESS KILLS WOMEN AND CHILDREN--

--MOTHERS AND FATHERS.

WWEE WILLL MMURDDERR TTHEM!

PERHAPS. OR YA MIGHT JUST DISCOVER--

--THE HENCHMEN AIN'T NO CHUMPS!

YERAGH!

STUK

SYMBIOTE'S PAIN TURNS TO RAGE--

--I'M POWERLESS--

--A SPECTATOR--

TAKE THE RIDE--

...

LET THE SYMBIOTE DO WHAT IT DOES--

KRASSH!!

--THEY DESERVE IT.

THEY DESERVE US.

SONOFA--

GDOOOM

THE POWER-- EUPHORIC.

ENJOYING IT--

BAD SIGN.

LAST DOSE OF THE SEDATIVE--

--TAKES EVERY BIT OF WILL POWER I HAVE TO FORCE THE SYMBIOTE TO COMPLY.

AN INJECTION BUYS ME AN HOUR--

ENOUGH TIME.

FIND THE VIBRANIUM--

--SET THE C4--

--VACATE PREMISES.

AND IF YOU THINK THERE'S A CHANCE YOU MIGHT BOTCH THE MISSION--

--JUST THINK OF THE BODIES BACK IN NROSVEKISTAN.

GO! WE GOT INTRUDERS ON SITE!

GET THE DAMNED SHIPMENT OUTTA HERE BEFORE--

TWAMM

NOT SURE WHICH I APPRECIATE MORE--

SNG

BLAM BLAM

PNG

TNG

--BEING BULLETPROOF--

BLAM

POW

--OR RUNNING AGAIN.

HOLD THIS.

BLAM

POW

POW

DEEP DEEP DEEP

HAIL MARY PLAY--

CAN THOMPSON COVER THE SPREAD?

CROWD GOES WILD.

GLPP

SOMEWHERE MICHAEL BAY FILLS HIS PANTS.

BRA-BOOOOM

EUPHORIA--

BAD SIGN.

BLAM BLAM BLAM

GHA

→BZRTT← HELLO? ARE YOU THERE?

DO YOU →BZZZRTT← DO YOU READ ME?

CORPORAL THOMPSON, ARE YOU THERE?

THANK GOD YOU MANAGED TO GET MY SHIPMENT UNDER CONTROL, CORPORAL, THANK THE GOOD LORD GOD.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOU--

ENOUGH POSTURING.

I'VE GOT SURVEILLANCE ALL OVER THE SAVAGE LAND.

WE SAW YOU WITHOUT THAT PERSNICKETY SUIT.

YOU DESTROYED MY MINING OPERATION.

FORTUNATELY, YOU'RE FLYING OUT EVERY BIT OF ANTARCTIC VIBRANIUM WE COULD DIG UP.

NOW, YOU HAVE SO MANY DIFFERENT LEVELS OF MILITARY CLEARANCE--

YOU SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE GETTING THAT CHOPPER TO NEW YORK.

YOU THINK I'M BRINGING IT TO YOU?!

I DO.

SEEMS FAIRLY **REASONABLE** GIVEN MY ASSOCIATE JACK O' LANTERN HAS YOUR LADY FRIEND STRAPPED TO A **GIANT BOMB.**

OSTENTATIOUS, BUT THE VISUAL SELLS THE SITUATION, RIGHT?

IF YOU HURT HER...

YES, YES. GET THAT OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM.

KEEP QUIET--PILOT THAT HELICOPTER TO NEW YORK--JACK'LL RELEASE BETTY.

I'M A VERY FAIR MAN--GIVING YOU SOME NICE OPTIONS HERE, AREN'T I, CORPORAL?

WIN-WIN. SEE, I DIDN'T KNOW **HOW** I WAS GOING TO GET MY VIBRANIUM TO NEW YORK TO BE WEAPONIZED.

AND THEN YOU ARRIVED, SENT FROM THE **HEAVENS**, WITH YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE.

I TRUST YOU'LL GET ME MY SHIPMENT, CORPORAL...

"...JUST IMAGINE WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO BETTY IF YOU DON'T."

BETTY? YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T LEAVE YOUR--

DOOR OPEN...

GLORY? IT'S PETER.

LISTEN-- I'M AT YOUR PLACE, IT'S BEEN RANSACKED. HAVE YOU SEEN BETTY?

MY GOD-- NO. SHE WAS TAKING THE DAY OFF, SAID SHE WAS GOING TO SLEEP IN...

CALL THE POLICE. SEND THEM TO YOUR APARTMENT.

PETER, WHAT'S GOING ON?

"TROUBLE."

WHEN THEY RAN MY CREDENTIALS, IT HAD TO SET OFF A RED LIGHT BACK AT BASE.

LET COMMAND KNOW I'M ALIVE--

ALIVE AND IN *CONTROL* OF THE *SYMBIOTE*.

Bushwick, New York.

BUT I'M *NOT* IN CONTROL--

THE SUIT IS.

EVERYONE, GIVE VENOM A ROUND OF APPLAUSE.

IT'S JUST PLAYING NICE.

HECK OF A JOB, TODAY. REALLY GOT US OUT OF A PICKLE.

CRIME-MASTER. PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.

IT'S LETTING ME FEEL LIKE I'M STILL IN CONTROL...

...FOR NOW.

BBETTTY... YYOU PPROOMISED UUSS...

I DID. I PROMISED YOU... OR *US*, PLURAL, SINGULAR-- HOWEVER YOU LIKE.

SHE'S IN A WAREHOUSE BY THE RIVER, AT THE END OF VALENTINE LANE. YOU HAVE...*FIVE MINUTES.*

IF YOU CALL YOUR SUPERIORS-- SHE'S *DEAD.*

WHHY LLEET UUS GO?

WELL, YOU'RE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S MOST IMPORTANT OPERATIVE.

AND *I* KNOW YOUR *IDENTITY.*

GIVEN HOW YOU *"ROLL"* IN YOUR DAILY LIFE, I BET WEARING THAT CREATURE IS A THRILL.

I BET YOU ALTER YOUR REPORT TO *OMIT* THE FACT THAT *I KNOW YOUR IDENTITY.*

IT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN KEEP THE SUIT.

GO. SAVE MISS BRANT. GO ABOUT YOUR LIVES.

YOU KEEP PLAYING SUPER-SPY.

ONE DAY, I'LL BE BACK, FOR A FAVOR.

TAKES EVERYTHING I'VE GOT TO STOP THE SUIT FROM EATING HIS FACE.

FOCUS ON BETTY.

NO FIGHT LEFT--

--SUIT TAKES THE WHEEL--

STILL--IT'S LISTENING--

STILL WILLING TO HELP ME SAVE HER.

KILLING THE MEN WHO DID THIS WILL WAIT.

GET ME TO HER.

YOU HEAR ME?

SAVE HER--

--PLEASE--

WHATEVER IT TAKES--

--DON'T LET ANYTHING STOP YOU.

THIS IS THE ABSOLUTE LAST THING I WANTED TO FIND.

ENOUGH!

THWOKK

NO COINCIDENCE--

IT MUST REMEMBER MY SECRET IDENTITY SOMEHOW--

USING MY FRIENDS AS BAIT AGAIN--

5-SSTOP-- W-WWE ARREN'T--I'M NNOT--

--EVER GOING TO HURT ANOTHER PERSON AGAIN!

LAY IN WITH ALL I'VE GOT--

KNOCK IT OUT FAST--

MAKE IT TALK--

THWOKK

FIND BETTY.

I BROUGHT THIS SYMBIOTE TO EARTH--

MY RESPONSIBILITY--

ONCE AND FOR ALL--

--BURY IT.

BEFORE HE--

THWIP

RUN!!

AS IN GO! SOME OTHER PLACE--RIGHT NOW!

HHURRTSS SSSOMEEONNE?

SKROOM

STOP!

NO TIME FOR THIS--

YOU HEAR ME?!

PLEASE!

GO NOW--

--OR BETTY IS GOING TO DIE!

CRASHING

KRASHH

NO RESPONSE--

BLINDED BY RAGE--

--ISN'T LISTENING--

--FOCUSED ON ONE THING--

K-KILLL SPPIDDER-MMAN!

DEEP DEEP DEEP

SIR?

BOY'S LOST CONTROL.

NO CHOICE THEN.

TEN

VENOM #4
"THE SAME COIN..."

JACK O' LANTERN INVITED ME TO JOIN CRIME MASTER'S HENCHMEN WITH ONE PROMISE--*LITTLE* WORK, *LOTS* OF MONEY.

EARN MYSELF A *BIG SHARE* OF SOME *AUSTRALIAN VIBRANIUM.*

RARE STUFF. MAKES BULLETS THAT MELT THROUGH OTHER METAL.

BOSS HAD A GEEZER SCIENTIST FIGURE OUT HOW TO WEAPONIZE IT.

GEEZER GOT KILLED, BUT BOSS GOT THE RECIPE.

WHAT THE--

JACK?

WE'RE ON SCHEDULE.

BOSS'S *SMART.* CUTS EVERYONE IN ON THE TAKE.

NONE OF THAT FIXED RATE *GARBAGE* I HAD WHEN I WAS RUNNING IN *DOCTOR OCTOPUS'S* GANG.

BOSS REWARDS INITIATIVE.

FOUND THIS ON THE COPTER, BOSS.

LIKE FINDING THIS THING HERE...

BOSS'LL SHOW GRATITUDE.

CRIME MASTER--

HE'S A *GOOD* GUY.

TAKES CARE HIS PEOP--*HEY!*

WAA--!

CORPORAL THOMPSON LEFT A BOMB.

BOOM

BAD BOY.

SOMEONE *PLEASE* CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG, BUT IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING, BY PUSHING THAT RED BUTTON, I WOULD NOW BE WATCHING THIS MONSTER *BLOW-THE-HELL-UP.*

SIR, THE DETONATION WENT OFF ACROSS TOWN IN A BUSHWICK WAREHOUSE DISTRICT, SIR.

NO WAY CORPORAL THOMPSON WOULD HAVE KNOWN HOW TO LOCATE THE BOMB...

OUR SYMBIOTE FRIEND HAS CLEARLY *LEARNED* FROM OUR *PREVIOUS MISSIONS* AND EJECTED THE *EXPLOSIVE CONTRAPTION.*

THAT *BEAST* IS OUTMANEUVERING US.

I WAS *PROMISED* NOTHING LIKE THAT WAS POSSIBLE.

I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, SIR...THE SYMBIOTE COULDN'T HAVE DETECTED THE BOMB'S LOCATION... UNLESS...I-IT MUST HAVE...

MUST HAVE WHAT, MACKENZIE?

LAST ISSUE--
S.W.

"IT READ MY MIND, SIR."

SPIDER-MAAAAN WE ARRE SOOOOO HAPPY.Y. YOOU ARE AALWAYYSSS ONN OURRR MINDSSS.

MONSTER'S TAKEN BETTY.

IT MUST REMEMBER... *SOMEHOW...*

REMEMBERS *WHO I AM...*

-KOFF-
-HAKK-

MY NAME IS FLASH THOMPSON.

I'M ABOUT TO KILL MY LIFELONG HERO.

WWWE HAATESS YOU! ALWWAYYS IN OOUR WAYY.

ALWAAYS YOUU CCAUSSE PRAIIN TO UsS.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT PAIN IS--

--BUT I'M GONNA SHOW YOU.

NO CONTROL.

BEST-CASE SCENARIO--

THOOOOM

--SPIDER-MAN *KILLS* US BEFORE WE *HURT* SOMEONE.

GGGGRRRRRENNNNNNGHHHHH

--LET HIM STOP US--

GET CONTROL LONG ENOUGH--

TELL HIM-- BETTY'S STRAPPED TO A BOMB--

L-LISTTEN... TOO MME... *LISSTEN...*

HOLD STILL--

GRADOOOOOM

GIVE ME SOMETHING WORTH LISTENING TO!

MY RESPONSIBILITY.

LET THIS MONSTER GO TOO LONG.

NOW BETTY--

NO. SHE'S ALIVE-- HAS TO BE-

WHERE IS SHE?! *WHERE?!*

GET IT UNDER CONTROL--

--TELL HIM--

...BRRAANNT... BBOMBB...

W-WHAT? *BOMB?!*

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HER?!

SKLAM!

CAN'T GET THROUGH-- RUN.

SYMBIOTE HATES THE IDEA.

WHA--?

B-BEETTYY...

ARE YOU TAUNTING ME--?!

TELL ME WHERE SHE IS!!

DO NOT FIGHT--STAY CALM--

MINUTES TO GET TO BETTY--

YOU HEAR ME, YOU SLIMY BLACK MONSTER?

GO NOW OR SHE'S DEAD!

THWIPP

ISN'T HITTING BACK--

NOW HE'S RUNNING...?

NO ESCAPE--

NOT THIS TIME.

RAGE.

LIKE A DRUG.

PURE.

YOU'RE GOING TO TALK IF I HAVE TO TEAR YOUR ARMS OFF!

NO MORE FIGHTING IT--

--NO MORE PAIN--

--NO MORE SPIDER-MAN.

SSHEE DDEAD-- JJUUSSSTT LIKKKEE YYOOU!!

TWWOKK

OOF--!

KRATOOOOM

COLD/ FLU PAIN RELIEF VITAMINS SLEEP AIDS DIET AIDS HUMIDIFIERS DIABETIC FITNESS

PRESCRIPTIONS

HHERRE WWE AAREE!! GGET UUPP--DDIE ONN YYOUR FEET!

HE'S ATTACKED US.

IMPRISONED US.

BETRAYED US.

KILL HIM.

NNEVERR AGGAINN DDO YYOU HUURT UUS!

NO-- SYMBIOTE INFECTING THINKING--

--KILL HIM--

--GET CONTROL--

SEDATIVES--CLASS IV

PRESC

SEDATIVES.

SHRAK

SEDATIVES--CLASS IV

NOM NOM NOM

EAT 'EM ALL-- HUNDREDS OF PILLS--

WHAT THE--?

--CALM IT DOWN--

HITS HARD... RAGE GOES SLEEPY...

NOT DONE FIGHTING ME...

BUT SLEEPY...

J-JUST TELL ME ⸗KOFF⸗ WHERE SHE IS--

FIGHT YOU W-WHEREVER YOU WANT ⸗KOFF⸗ JUST LET ME SAVE HER.

SEDATIVES-- FADING FAST--

SYMBIOTE'S RAGE GROWING--

ONE SHOT AT THIS--

W-WWARE-HHOUSSSE...

VALLENTTINE LLANE.

VALENTINE LANE? IS THAT WHERE SHE IS? CAN I TRUST YOU--

WWEEE DDON'T CARE WHO YYOU TTRUSST-- WE WWILL DEAL WITH BBETTTYY--

PEDESTRIANS ALL AROUND ME--

--MY GOD!

YOUU WIILL BE DDEAD!

GET BACK! ALL OF YOU-- GET BACK!!

HE'S GONNA KILL US!!

LOOK OUT!

NO TIME FOR WEBBING--

ONLY TIME FOR THE HARD WAY--

YERAGH--

THUD

LISTEN TO ME--STOP!!
SHE'S GOING TO DIE!!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?!
YOU DO NOT GET TO KILL SPIDER-MAN.
IF YOU STAY, YOU WILL KILL BETTY.
IF YOU STAY, DODGE WILL KILL ME!
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT?
TO FIND ANOTHER HOST?
SILENT...
CONTEMPLATING...
LIKES ME.
DOESN'T WANT ANOTHER HOST.
AIN'T I MR. POPULAR?
THANK YOU.
THWIPP
IMAGES OF BETTY--
HOURS SPENT WATCHING HER. NO MATTER WHO I WAS DATING--
MAYBE IT WAS ALWAYS HER.
IF I GET HER KILLED--
--STOP IT.
ALMOST THERE.
FEW MORE SECONDS.
HOLD HER IN MY ARMS--
--NEVER LET HER GO.
MAKE SURE SHE KNOWS I'LL ALWAYS PROTECT HER--
MAKE SURE SHE KNOWS--

--I'LL ALWAYS LOVE HER.

GRRR

...I'M THE VILLAIN.

YOU'RE GOING TO BE JUST FINE, MISS. BRANT.

SHE'S IN SHOCK BUT SHE'S *ALIVE.*

YOU HEAR ME?!

YOU FAILED.

THANNK YOU...DEARR GODD...THHANK YOU...

ARE YOU THANKING ME?!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF *DERANGED SICKO* YOU ARE, OR HOW YOU GOT THAT SYMBIOTE--BUT WE ARE *NOT* DONE.

I'LL FIND YOU. AND WHEN I DO...

...YOU *WON'T* BE THANKING ME.

SYMBIOTE GIVES OVER CONTROL.

WENT TOO FAR--KNOWS IT.

A SPIDER TRACER.

KEEP IT.

BRING IT WITH.

ONCE I STOP THE SHIPMENT, I'LL PROBABLY NEED SPIDER-MAN TO FIND ME AGAIN...

...FIND ME AND TAKE ME DOWN.

KATHERINE? ARE YOU THER--

THIS IS GENERAL DODGE, SON.

YOU BETTER HAVE ONE SWEET AND STICKY SONG TO SING ME, YOU--

SCOLDING WILL HAVE TO WAIT-- THE VIBRANIUM SHIPMENT IS IN NEW YORK.

EN ROUTE TO STOP IT NOW.

HAVE SOME SEDATIVES IN ME, HAVE CONTROL OVER THE SUIT.

I'M SENDING YOU THE LOCATION.

I WUV TO PWARTY.

AND, SIR, I APPRECIATE NOT BEING BLOWN UP.

YES...WELL, LET'S SAVE THE APPRECIATION AND FOCUS ON SALVAGING THE JOB AT HAND.

YOU DO WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO DO--

I WUV YOUR COSTOOME.

I WUV YOUR SOWL.

--YOU STOP THAT DAMNED SHIPMENT, CORPORAL.

I WUV YOUR BWUUD.

AWW-- C'MON!

I WUV DESTWUCTION!
I WUV FWIRE!
FWOOSH
GHA--!
I WUV MWURDER!
KRUCHH
MY BWAINS!!
GET THE SHIPMENT--
--IF THAT STUFF IS DISTRIBUTED--
WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN.
THWIPP
I APPRECIATE ALL THE "WUV," GENTLEMEN...BUT I'M LIKE THE LYNYRD SKYNYRD OF THE SUPER HERO SET--
TAXI
GOTTA BE AS FREE AS A BIRD NOW...
SHWOOOOSH
EWW-- I DON'T WUV SKWYNYRD.
HORNE

AND THIS BIRD YOU'LL NEVER CHANGE!

DON'T HAVE TIME FOR JACK O' LANTERN--

HE DOESN'T CARE.

KRAAAK

AND THIS BIRD YOU CANNOT CHANGE!

HMM. GOOD FUN.

ANY-HOO, SHIPMENT'S ALREADY ON ITS WAY TO OUR PROCESSING FACILITY.

IF YOU WANT TO STOP IT, ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS *ONE* THING--

WHOOOOOSH

--GET PAST ME.

OF--!

WUNKK

I'M MOVING IN SLOW MOTION--

YEARS TOO LATE--

KA-DOOOOOM

I NEW AT THIS-- NEVER HAD A *NEMESIS.*

SYMBIOTE'S COOKED.

DOPED UP ON SEDATIVES.

KRAVEN.

SPIDER-MAN.

--I'VE GOT *NOTHING* LEFT.

I KILLED ALL THE JERKS WHO WORE THIS MASK BEFORE ME...

NONE OF THEM WERE ARCH-ENEMY CLASS, THOUGH. NOT REALLY.

STILL, I WONDERED HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE, RIGHT?

TO EARN A TRUE *ARCH-ENEMY* YOU GOTTA HOLD A AWFULLY *PERSONAL* GRUDGE.

AND, GUESS *WHAT?*

I'VE GOT ONE.

WITH *YOU.*

KBOOM

THAT GRENADE IN NROSVEKISTAN DID A REAL NUMBER ON ME.*

AND I *DID* JUST TRY TO *BLOW UP* YOUR BEST GAL.

ARCH-ENEMY 101.

*BACK IN ISSUE #1-- S.W.

DADDY-O THINKS YOU'RE SOME KIND OF HOT ASSET. I WANT TO KILL YOU.

MOTIVES AT CROSS-PURPOSES.

HAVE TO KEEP IT OUR LITTLE SECRE--

JACK-- WHERE ARE YOU?!

GOT SIDE-TRACKED--

MY VIBRANIUM IS BEING INTERCEPTED BY GOVERNMENT GOONS!

THE SHIPMENT YOU WERE SENT TO GUARD!!

ON MY WAY.

TO BE CONTINUED.

BE SEEIN' YOU SOON...

...EUGENE.

MAYBE NOT ME...

...BUT YOU'LL BE SEEIN' *SOMEONE* SOON.

Project Rebirth.

HIDDEN SNUGLY IN THE CATSKILL MOUNTAINS.

THOMPSON!

YOU LOOK ME IN THE EYE AND TELL ME YOU NEVER ONCE LOST CONTROL BEYOND THE FEW MINUTES IN TIMES SQUARE?

I WAS USING THE SEDATIVES AARON GAVE ME WHILE IN THE SAVAGE LAND.

WELL, AFTER KRAVEN BEGAN HUNTING ME...

YOU WERE IN THE SAVAGE LAND FOR FIFTY-SIX HOURS, SON. YOU MAINTAINED *TOTAL* CONTROL ALL THAT TIME?

THIS IS IT-- TELL HIM ABOUT CRIME MASTER.

COME CLEAN.

WHEN IT ATTACKED SPIDER-MAN...THAT WAS THE *ONLY* TIME I LOST CONTROL.

STILL, I GOT THE SHIPMENT, BROUGHT IT TO NEW YORK, AND IF I'D HAVE HAD MORE SEDATIVES, I COULD HAVE BROUGHT IT HOME.

THE MEN WE FOUND WITH THE SHIPMENT...ALL HAD *BOMBS* IN THEIR *TEETH*. DETONATED AFTER WE BROUGHT THEM IN.

THE MAN WE'RE DEALING WITH, HE'S AS NASTY AS WE'VE ENCOUNTERED.

I'M NOT GIVING UP TILL WE GET HIM, SIR.

STILL...EVEN WITH OUR MYSTERIOUS ARMS DEALER AT LARGE, I THINK WE CAN CALL THIS A WIN.

WE SAVED COUNTLESS LIVES, MAINTAINED GLOBAL STABILITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY FLOURISH, THE SUN WILL RISE, PUPPIES REMAIN CUTE, AND THE SHIPMENT OF NASTY METAL CAN BE *DESTROYED*.

FALSIFYING REPORT TO A SUPERIOR.

ARTICLE 32 HEARING FOLLOWED BY *CERTAIN* COURT-MARTIAL.

FOLLOWED BY LIFELONG *DISGRACE*.

DESTROYING THAT VIBRANIUM WAS YOUR MISSION, SON. MISSION YOU FAILED.

WHEN YOU WERE BRINGING THE SHIPMENT TO THE MILITARY, DID YOU HONESTLY THINK THEY'D DESTROY IT?

YES, SIR, I DID, SIR. GIVEN ALL I'VE BEEN HEARING IS THAT THIS STUFF IS TOO DANGEROUS TO BE USED!

LOOK AT THE RISK WE TAKE SENDING YOU OUT IN THAT SUIT.

IT'S ONE THING WITH VENOM; YOU'VE GOT A GOOD GUY CONTROLLING IT.

THIS VIBRANIUM...IT'S CLEARLY TOO DANGEROUS TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF ANYONE!

ANYONE OTHER THAN US, CORPORAL.

THE GOOD GUYS.

IT'S ALL STARTING TO FEEL A BIT TOO SUBJECTIVE TO ME, SIR.

NOT TO ME IT ISN'T.

GO HOME BEFORE THIS INSUBORDINATION GETS ME UPSET.

TRY AND GET YOUR HEAD AROUND WHO EXACTLY IS IN CHARGE AROUND HERE.

SIR, I WILL, SIR.

Brooklyn.
BETTY. BRANT'S APARTMENT.
POLICE JUST LEFT, MRS. BRANT--
BETTY IS FINE-- REALLY.
YES, MA'AM-- NO--I WAS AT WORK--CLEVELAND-- FUND RAISING, YES.
HAPPY TO SERVE MY COUNTRY--THANK YOU--I'LL PASS IT ALONG--BYE.
SOME DAYS I THINK YOU SHOULD DATE MY GRANDMOTHER.
ARMY
THANKS FOR THE INTERCEPTION.
WHAT DID SHE SAY?
CONCERNED. CURIOUS IF ANYONE KNOWS WHY YOU WERE TARGETED... TOLD HER WE'LL PROBABLY *NEVER* KNOW.
I KNOW WHY.
THE ORGANIZED CRIME STORY I WROTE GOT THEM *UPSET*--
HIT A NERVE.
YEAH... *MAYBE.*
COULD BE A MILLION REASONS...
ARMY
VENOM TOLD SPIDER-MAN WHERE TO FIND ME. THEY WANTED TO SEND A MESSAGE.
MORE LIKELY IT WAS SOME *SICK* SPEED TRIAL.
MAYBE THAT MONSTER WAS *USING YOU* TO GET TO SPIDER-MAN.
WHY ME? NO...NOT *EVERYTHING* IS ALWAYS ABOUT SPIDER-MAN, PETE.

MAYBE SPIDER-MAN GOT IN THE *MIDDLE* OF SOMETHING HERE...I DON'T KNOW.

HE'S JUST A TROUBLE MAGNET.

Y-YOU'RE STARTING TO SOUND LIKE JONAH...

MAYBE JAMESON HAD A POINT, SPIDER-MAN *DOES* DRAW TROUBLE.

I'M JUST SAYING, IF IT WEREN'T FOR SPIDER-MAN...

I WOULD'VE SAVED HER MYSELF.

I'D BE *DEAD.*

SPIDEY'S JUST DOING HIS BEST TO KEEP PEOPLE SAFE. SOMETIMES IT WORKS OUT, OTHER TIMES...

I GET IT.

I GET IT.

OR... I DON'T KNOW...

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. MAYBE IT *WAS* HIS FAULT...

MAYBE SPIDER-MAN BRINGS MORE TROUBLE THAN HE SOLVES...

NO... FORGET IT, I WAS JUST POPPING OFF, MAN.

TOSSLE

MAYBE *YOU* WERE THE REAL TARGET...

W-WHAT?!

THE HEAD OF SPIDEY'S FAN CLUB-- *HIGH VALUE TARGET.*

NO, POOR FLASH, YOU CAN'T BE AT THE CENTER OF *EVERY* DRAMA.

THIS WAS ALL BROUGHT ON BY BETTY BRANT'S CRACK JOURNALISM.

AND THIS'S JUST THE START. IF THEY WERE UPSET BY WHAT I WAS WRITING BEFORE...

I'M GOING TO NEED A PERSONAL SECURITY TEAM WHEN I'M DONE EXPOSING THESE CREEPS.

SPIDER-MAN WAS OUT LOOKING FOR BETTY...

YEAH?

HOW DID HE KNOW SHE WAS IN TROUBLE?

I CALLED THE POLICE.

HE MUST HAVE SOMEONE INSIDE.

MAYBE SHE WAS JUST UNLUCKY...

ENDED UP IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING BAD.

YEAH... THAT MUCH IS CLEAR.

oring for training and qualification

10, 9, 8 rings ..... – 5

ing ..... – 4

other hits on silhouette ..... – 3

	Number of Hits	Shot V
X		
10		
9		
8		
7		
0		0
Missing		0
Totals		

Scorer's Initials .....

Competitor's Signature .....

Range Officer's Signature .....

Match # .....

Relay # .....

Target # .....

Stage # .....

VENOM #5
"FATHER'S DAY"

Manhattan.

...ANYWAY, NAME'S HUMAN FLY.

BELIEVE ME, YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

REALLY. YOU'VE GOT TIME LEFT.

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN YOU...

NOT LIKE THIS.

NEED YOU TO LOSE A LITTLE WEIGHT, TOUGHEN UP...

MURGHLE!!

LIKE THIS LITTLE FELLOW.

GLORFF

SQUEEEE

SCHOMPP

A LITTLE *AMUSE-BOUCHE.*

TAKES CALORIES TO LIVE. YOU KNOW THAT.

I LIVE. I TAKE CALORIES. CIRCLE OF LIFE.

I SEE YOU-- *YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!*

WATCH IT ON THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL. ANIMALS EAT ANIMALS.

MURGHLE!

NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT!

ANIMALS IS WHAT WE ARE.

MURGH-MURLE!!

HUNGRY ANIMA--

TWIPP

ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND THOSE OTHER ANIMALS--

--THEY KNOW BETTER THAN TO TRY AND EAT A SENATOR'S DAUGHTER.

TWOKK

I'M NOT COMPLAINING--

--YOUR HIGH DOLLAR DINNER PLANS GOT ME ASSIGNED TO YOUR CASE.

IGNORE THE GORE--

THE SMELL.

PSYCHO KILLS INNOCENTS, FEDERAL AGENT TAKES DOWN PSYCHO--*THAT'S* THE CIRCLE OF LIFE.

PNG TNG SNG

BLAP BLAP BLAP

A YOUNG BOY WITH NO STOMACH STARES AT ME FROM ACROSS THE ROOM.

TWO TOURS OF DUTY, NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE--

GLORFF

GHREGH-!!

DAMMIT-- FAST AS HELL--

KLOOOM

WHAT DO **YOU** KNOW ABOUT **ANYTHING?!**

DISTRACTED--

--PAY FOR IT.

GONGG

GHRAGHAH!!

IF YOU'D JUST STOP HAVING *FEELINGS*-- IT MAKES EVERY-THING *SO MUCH EASIER.*

SONIC IMPACT--

SUIT STOPS RESPONDING-- IN SHOCK--

YOU WERE UPSET BY MY FOOD, SPIDER-MAN-- I SAW YOU--

THAT'S YOUR *FEELINGS.*

THEY'LL GET YOU KILLED IN THE END.

GLORRFF

SUIT IS FRENZIED--

--REACTING TO THIS PLACE--

REACTING TO THE BELL--

FALLOUT

HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW?

THEY COME FOR YOU.

PRIZED GAZELLE.

MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE REST OF THE HERD-- MORE DELICIOUS.

YO, JEFF GOLDBLUM CALLED--

AND HE WANTS--

AH, SCREW IT.

OPEN WIDE.

GOTTA CONTROL THIS VENOM SYMBIOTE.

RAGE NEARLY OUT OF CONTROL-- TEMPERAMENT NOT MY STRONG POINT.

WHY THE HELL DID THEY CHOOSE *ME?*

GLROOOOM

SOME BLIND GENERAL WANTS TO EMPOWER A FELLOW DISABLED WAR HERO.

HE SAYS, "THIS ONE'S THE HEAD OF SPIDER-MAN'S FAN CLUB."

"SURE-- WHY NOT?

"CHANCES ARE WE'LL HAVE TO BLOW HIM UP IN A FEW WEEKS ANYWAY."

TWIPP

AND WHY DID I TAKE THE JOB?

SERVICE TO MY COUNTRY.

THAT'S THE PRETTY ANSWER--

THE SHINY LIE I TELL THE SHRINKS AT BASE.

LOOK OUT--!

--ALL GOING TO DIE--

--FALLING ON MY SON, PLEASE--

TRUTH IS I'M A KID RUNNING THE GRIDIRON...

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THE LAST OF ME, SPIDER-MAN!!

...STILL TRYING TO EARN THE RESPECT OF A MAN INCAPABLE OF GIVING IT.

THWIPP

IF I WERE SPIDER-MAN, I'D HAVE ALREADY DELIVERED A DOZEN, GREAT ONE-LINERS.

A FLY, CAUGHT IN A WEB...

THAT KIND OF STUFF.

KATHERINE, HUMAN FLY IS DOWN. NEED A TEAM TO SCOOP HIM UP.

ON MY WAY TO EVAC POINT.

EASE GENERAL DODGE INTO THIS, BUT...

WHOA!

"...I'M PRETTY SURE I MADE THE SIX O'CLOCK NEWS."

DUDE. FORGET SPIDEY! YOU NEED *THAT GUY'S* TEE SHIRT.

YEAH...

CLS

SAVED A DOZEN LIVES.

APPREHENDED A TWISTED KILLER.

ALL IN FORTY-NINE SECONDS WITH NOT A SINGLE CASUALTY.

MY REWARD: A SCOLDING FOR BEING FILMED.

SHOULD'VE TOLD GENERAL DODGE ABOUT CRIME-MASTER.

THAT HE COMPROMISED ME.

THEY'D TAKE THE SUIT. MANDATORY RELOCATION.

BETTY'D BE *REAL* HAPPY ABOUT THAT.

NEW LIFE AS EUGENE ELLINGTON, LEGLESS CAR SALESMAN FROM TACOMA.

NO, THANK YOU.

I'LL *DEAL* WITH CRIME MASTER.

JUST KEEP *LYING* TO DODGE.

LYING TO BETTY.

DEEP DEEP DEEP

NEW HIGHLIGHTS IN A LONG LINE OF BRILLIANT THOMPSON CHOICES.

→DEEEP← FLASH, IT'S MOM. I HOPE YOU'RE WELL.

I KNOW HOW BUSY YOU ARE... YOU'VE BEEN ON MY MIND.

I'M CALLING BECAUSE...I HAVEN'T SEEN YOUR FATHER... NOT FOR A FEW DAYS.

...HE'D BEEN COMING HOME DRUNK.

ACTING LIKE HE USED TO...

CALL ME IF YOU'VE SEEN HI--

GHRAHH!

SKLAMM

KRASHH

THE OLD MAN HAD A NICKNAME FOR ME GROWING UP.

"SONNY BOY."

WHEN HE WAS SOBER, IT HAD A FRIENDLY RING TO IT.

WHEN HE WAS DRINKING...

...IT REVEALED HOW MUCH HE HATED ME.

SONNY BOY.

IT'S NOT EVEN A SWEAR WORD.

WORSE SOMEHOW.

HITS HARDER.

HE TOLD MOM IT WAS AFFECTIONATE.

Bedford Avenue Station

YOS, SOUVENIRS, HALF OFF! GET A MUG, YOS!

HE COACHED MY TEAM IN 5TH GRADE.

WENT IN HARD ON ME...

...HAD TO SHOW THE OTHER PARENTS HE WOULDN'T GO EASY ON HIS BOY.

QUIT CHASING BUTTERFLIES, SONNY BOY!

LIFT UP YOUR DRESS AND RUN!

STILL, IT WAS PREFERABLE TO THE OTHER KIND OF ATTENTION.

I KILLED MYSELF TRYING TO MAKE HIM RESPECT ME.

FOOTBALL UNTIL MY BONES WERE BROKEN.

NEVER A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

WHERE WERE YOU STATIONED?

ANBAR PROVINCE. FORCE RECON.

HELP A HUNGRY VET

YOU?

MOSUL. ARMY.

YOU MARINES WERE NO JOKE. SEMPER FI, BROTHER.

STORED UP EVERY BEATING THE OLD MAN LAID DOWN ON ME.

DIVVIED 'EM BACK OUT TO EVERY KID AT SCHOOL.

KIDS LOVE TO WATCH A BULLY WORK SOME POOR GEEK.

ADULTS TOO.

THEY'D CHEER ME ON. THE APPROVAL FELT BETTER THAN THE VENTING.

APPROVAL... SPENT MY LIFE SEEKING VALIDATION FROM OTHERS TO MAKE UP FOR HIS INABILITY TO GIVE ME ANY.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH SUCCESS I HAD ON THE GRIDIRON...

NO MATTER HOW MANY OF THE HOTTEST GIRLS I DATED...

NO MATTER HOW MANY MEDALS I WON...

NO PRAISE I EVER RECEIVED COULD SATISFY ME.

BECAUSE IT WASN'T FROM HIM.

AN ETERNAL 10-YEAR-OLD WAITING FOR HIS DAD TO SAY SOMETHING NICE.

JOINING THE ARMY WAS THE FIRST THING I EVER DID FOR MYSELF.

AND THE FIRST TIME HE WAS EVER EVEN A LITTLE PROUD OF ME.

MOM SAID HE'D STOPPED DRINKING...

...SAID HE HAD HIS TWO-YEAR SOBER CHIP.

SHE MADE ME PROMISE I'D GIVE HIM A SECOND CHANCE.

SWALLOW THE YEARS OF HIS CRAP AND START AT ZERO.

BEFORE I JOINED THE ARMY, I FELL DOWN A BOTTLE MYSELF.

MEDICATED ALL OF THAT SADNESS, ALL OF THAT INSECURITY, BLOTTED IT OUT.

SO WHO WAS I TO LOOK DOWN MY NOSE AT HIM?

BUT I ALWAYS PROMISED MYSELF ONE THING--

--ONE CAVEAT TO THE WHOLE DAMN DEAL--

SALE

IF THE OLD MAN *EVER* STARTED DRINKING AGAIN--

--HE'S DEAD TO ME.

ALE

MY GOD, FLASH THOMPSON...ARE YOU *ON TIME?*

MY GOD, BETTY BRANT, I BELIEVE THAT *I* AM.

WELL, LET ME REWARD YOU, MY PAVLOVIAN DOG.

SMOOCH

PRETTY CHEERFUL... ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

I GOT *LUCKY*, SPIDER-MAN SAVED ME!

I'M GRATEFUL FOR THE GOOD FORTUNE I'VE BEEN HANDED, CAN'T FOCUS ON THE NEGATIVE.

LAST ISH --S.W.

GLAD TO SEE YOU HOLDING SUCH AN *OPTIMISTIC* ATTITUDE, MS. BRANT.

LIFE IS *SHORT*, I WON'T SPEND ANY OF IT FEELING SORRY FOR MYSELF.

LEARNED THAT FROM YOU, MR. THOMPSON.

PLUS, THERE'S A SILVER LINING-- I'M WRITING AGAIN.

I GOT MY BLOG BACK UP. MY LATEST ARTICLE ON THE KINGPIN'S RETURN HAS HAD ALMOST A MILLION HITS.

THAT'S *AMAZING*, BETTY. DANGEROUS, BUT AMAZING.

IF THE CRIMINALS IN THIS CITY THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO SHUT ME UP--

--THEY WERE WRONG, BUB.

SNIKT!

LISTEN, ALL THESE V.A. FUNDRAISING TRIPS...

I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T BEEN HERE.

I GET IT...STILL, IT'S NOT TOO MUCH TO ASK FOR A CALL.

I'M WORTH A CALL.

I'LL BE BLUNT, FLASH. IF YOU'RE NOT HERE, *YOU'RE NOT HERE.*

AT SOME POINT I'LL HAVE TO *GET ON* WITH MY LIFE.

EVENTUALLY, I WON'T ANSWER WHEN YOU *DO* CALL.

I GET IT. I DO.

AND I'M SORRY THAT I'VE BEEN SO BAD ABOUT IT.

IT'S BEEN *STRESSFUL*... I'M ABSOLUTELY EXHAUSTED.

I HOPE YOU'RE NOT *TOO EXHAUSTED* TO MAKE UP WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND, MR. THOMPSON.

BECAUSE YOUR GIRLFRIEND NEEDS TO BE *MADE UP* WITH.

I THINK I'VE GOT *EXACTLY* ENOUGH ENERGY LEFT TO--

TUES: Check Jameson approval rating

BREEP BREEP BROOP

I'M SORRY--I HAVE TO CHECK...

I GET IT--DUTY CALLS.

TUES: Check Jameson approval rating

MOM?

OKAY, *CALM DOWN.*

I GOT YOUR MESSAGE-- *NO*--YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, THIS IS NOT MY PROBLEM ANYMORE.

NO-- IT'S *NOT.*

I TOLD YOU BOTH-- I CAN GET OVER EVERYTHING--I CAN MOVE PAST IT-- GET ON WITH MY LIFE--

BUT I CAN'T--*I WON'T*--IF HE'S *STILL* DRINKING.

YOU MARRIED HIM-- I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE IN THE MATTER!

IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO DISRUPT A SINGLE EVENING OF MY LIFE TO GO PULL HIM OUT OF SOME DANK BAR YOU HAVE--

...

DON'T... DON'T CRY, MOM. I'M SORRY.

I KNOW YOU'RE ALONE. I'M SORRY.

I WILL-- I PROMISE-- I'LL BRING HIM HOME.

FLASH? ARE YOU OKAY?

I HAVE TO GO.

YOU WANT ME TO COME WITH?

I'LL COME WITH...

THANKS FOR COMING, PETE.

OF COURSE. I'M ALWAYS HERE, FLASH. NO NEED TO THANK ME.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? HOW ARE YOU?

JUGGLING LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. IT'S JUST THROWING THIS LITTLE CHERRY ON TOP...

IT'S A BIT *MUCH*.

YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT ME TO GO IN ALONE?

THANKS, PARKER, BUT I'M OKAY.

NOPE. DON'T KNOW 'IM.

THANK YOU.

"SORRY, HAVEN'T SEEN HARRISON IN AGES."

"DOESN'T LOOK FAMILIAR."

"WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE, MISSING PERSONS? NEVER SEEN 'IM."

"DON'T KNOW. BUT, IF YOU AIN'T DRINKIN', GOTTA ASK YOU TO LEAVE."

"SEE A LOT OF PEOPLE COME AN' GO... HE DON'T LOOK FAMILIAR."

ANY OTHER IDEAS WHERE HE MIGHT GO?

ANY OTHER BARS HE'D FREQUENT WHEN YOU WERE A KID?

NO, SORRY, PETE!

AFTER THE SON OF A BITCH WOULD LOSE HIS MIND AND BEAT ME, I DIDN'T ASK WHAT BAR HE'D BE HITTING UP NEXT!

KLAM

QUICK TO ANGER, SECRETIVE, ABUSIVE, AND WITHHOLDING...

APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM THE TREE, HUH?

IT FELL PRETTY FAR.

YOU ARE NOT YOUR DAD, FLASH.

YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

AND BEFORE YOU ANSWER, REMEMBER I CAN DUMP YOU OVER RIGHT HERE.

BREEP BREEP

HELLO?

THANK YOU...

"...I'LL BE RIGHT THERE."

AND THAT'S =HIC= HOW WE DID IT BACK IN MY DAY...

NYPD

CRACK 'EM AN' STACK 'EM. HAD TO =HIC= IT WAS A DIFFERENT TIME.

HOW I'D BE DOING IT NOW =HIC= YOU COULD LEARN A THING OR TWO, PAUL.

THAT'S GREAT, HARRISON.

IF I WERE STILL IN THE DEPARTMENT, THING'S BE DIFFERENT. NO QUESTION. IF I WERE STILL A COP--

DAD. IT'S *TIME* TO GO.

AHH--YOU RATTED ME OUT, PAUL?

YOU'RE THREE SHEETS TO THE WIND, HARRISON. YOU SHOULD GO HOME.

WHEN I'M READY.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, BOY.

I'M ***NOT*** WORRIED ABOUT ***YOU***. I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE POOR WOMAN WHO DECIDED TO SPEND HER LIFE WITH YOU.

I TOLD HER I'D BRING YOU HOME--

THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO DO.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE ***SALT*** TO TAKE ME WHEN YOU ***HAD*** LEGS--

YOU OUGHTA THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU START ***POPPING*** OFF THAT MOUTH OF YOURS, ***SONNY BOY.***

HAVE A DRINK.

MAYBE IT'LL HELP.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU...?

WHAT'S THE MATTER?!

I GOT A WEAK CRIPPLE FOR A KID!

WIDE OPEN-- BREAK HIS NOSE.

SMASH HIS SNARLING MOUTH. SHUT HIM UP--

PAY HIM BACK.

IT'S WHAT HE'D DO TO ME.

WHA--

BUT I'M NOT HIM.

YOU DON'T IMPRESS ME.

CRIPPLED FREELOADER-- LIVIN' ON THE GOVERNMENT TIT. NO JOB...

LEANING ON UNCLE SAM WITH THE REST OF THE LOSERS.

GET WHAT YOU DESERVE IN THIS LIFE... GET...

...YOU DESERVE...

KRASH

MOM'S VOICE CRACKED WHEN I TOLD HER WHERE TO MEET US.

THE DOCTORS TELL ME HE HAS CIRRHOSIS OF THE LIVER.

HE'S KNOWN FOR A YEAR... JUST DIDN'T TELL ANYONE.

ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL

HE FIGURES HE'S GOING TO BE *DEAD* SOON, WHY NOT BE *DRUNK*.

SICK THING IS I *GET IT*.

MIGHT EVEN HAVE DONE THE SAME IN HIS SHOES.

BUT ANY IDENTIFICATION, ANY SYMPATHY, DRAINS WHEN I HAVE TO BE THE ONE TO TELL HER.

SHE *BREAKS* IN FRONT OF ME.

HE RUINED IT ALL. WITH ONE NIGHT.

BROUGHT ME BACK TO THOSE MEMORIES.

ROBBED ME OF THE PEACE BETWEEN US.

LIKE EVERYTHING IN HIS LIFE, HE HAD TO END THINGS A MESS.

EUGENE...

WITH THOSE STUPID ENOUGH TO LOVE HIM TO PICK UP THE TAB.

SON...?

BREEP BREEP

BREEP BREEP

DON'T ANS--

THIS IS FLASH.

SIR, YES, SIR.

I UNDERSTAND...

...I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.

VENOM #6
"SPIDER-ISLAND"

New York City. Now.

IN THE PAST TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A LARGE PORTION OF THE POPULATION OF MANHATTAN HAVE BEEN *INFECTED* WITH SPIDER POWERS.

THOMPSON, YOU AND THAT SYMBIOTE ARE THE BEST RESOURCE WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS.

TURNS OUT WHEN A RANDOM SAMPLING OF HUMANS ARE HANDED SUPER-POWERS, MORE GO *BAD* THAN GOOD.

SIR, THESE ARE *CIVILIANS*...WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU WANT ME TO *DO* DOWN THERE?

"THE CITY HAS BEEN QUARANTINED, BUT A GIANT SPIDER-BEAST IS PUSHING THROUGH AT A CITY WIDE CORDON CHARGED WITH HOLDING BACK THE INFECTED POPULATION.

"THIS THING HOLDS THE ANSWERS TO WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH. WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT IT WANTS."

Y-YOU'RE NOT GOING ANOTHER STEP. GOD AS MY WITNESS--

--THIS IS AS FAR AS YOU GO!

NOT AS FARRR!

BRING IT IN--*ALIVE*--AND I CAN GIVE THE GENERAL *SOME* IDEA *WHAT* IT IS.

ALIVE. EASY TO SAY, RIGHT? JUST SLIDES RIGHT OUT OF YOUR MOUTH.

FLASH, I HAVE BETTY BRANT ON YOUR CELL PHONE LINE... DIRECTING TO YOUR EARPIECE.

FLASH, MY GOD, WHERE ARE YOU?

I'M DOWNTOWN, BETTY-- TRAPPED IN THE SUBWAY, IT'S PANDEMONIUM--

I'M STILL AT THE HOSPITAL... WAITING...WITH YOUR DAD.

--MOVE IT! SOMEONE GET ME A GURNEY--

--MY *SON!* HAS ANYONE--

--THIRD FLOOR, AND *HURRY*--

THEY'RE EVACUATING EVERYONE--THE AREA IS GETTING TOO DANGEROUS.

THEY CAN'T MOVE YOUR FATHER, DOCTOR'S JUST NOT SURE THAT HE'D SURVIVE BEING TRANSPORTED.

I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE HIM, FLASH.

BUT LISTEN... HE'S...

JUST... GET HERE AS SOON AS YOU CAN...

"...THINGS DON'T LOOK GOOD."

YOU'RE NOT GETTING BY! DO YOU GET IT?!

TWONGG

KWUDD

YOU GET IT?

I DON'T--

BUT I DIDN'T HEAR THE JOKE.

KWWUDD

BETTY DIDN'T TRY AND SWEETEN THE SITUATION UP ANY.

MADE SURE I KNEW--

NO SECOND CHANCE AT THIS--

DAD'S DYING.

LET HIM.

BRAKKA BRAKKA

PNG TNG PNG

BRAKKA

SNK

GRAKK--!

NOT MY PROBLEM.

GAVE HIM ENOUGH SECOND CHANCES--

SSHHHHH

DAMMIT--

ACIDIC WEBBING.

HEAD IN THE GAME, THOMPSON.

BUT HOLD BACK--

GAUGE WHAT HE'S WORTH--

--DON'T WANT HIM DEAD--

--HE DOESN'T SHOW THE SAME COURTESY--

--FANGS--

SOMETHING ICY TRICKLES DOWN MY BACK--

--NOT COLD--

SCHUNKK

GHRAAWGHH!

POISON--

HOLDING BACK-- ARROGANT--

DISTRACTED-- WRAP THIS UP--

CRUSH ITS THROAT--

--TEAR OFF ITS HEAD--

KILL THE SON OF A BITCH!

GRAKK--!

BLAM BLAM

BLAM

--SHUT UP--

CALM DOWN.

GET CONTROL.

GET SOME SPACE.

BETTY'S VOICE--

BLAM BLAM

NO QUESTION ABOUT IT--

JUST LIKE MY FATHER TO PICK RIGHT NOW TO START DYING.

FOCUS-- CAN'T LET THIS THING PASS--

GOD KNOWS WHAT HE'S UP TO--GOD KNOWS--

AARON WANTS THIS THING *ALIVE*--

--AWFUL EASY WORD TO SAY.

MEMORY

--NEVER BEEN HIT THAT HARD.

DON'T WANT THIS JOB ANYMORE--JUST REINFORCES IT.

ALMOST TOLD DODGE WHEN HE CALLED--SHOULD'VE JUST TOLD HIM--

PNG

SNK

PNG

BLAM BLAM

-KOFF- -KOFF-

THIS IS MY LAST MISSION.

I QUIT.

HEY-- YOUR NAME'S GRAVITY, RIGHT?

YOU GO HEAVY OR LIGHT?

-KOFF- -KOFF-

DON'T WANT THE DAMMED SUIT.

NEVER WANT TO SEE THIS THING AGAIN.

COME ON, KID--THAT YOU?

Y-YEAH MAN, THAT'S ME.

PAID MY DUES--SERVED MY COUNTRY.

WHOA--

YOU'LL HAVE TO FIGURE THIS OUT AS WE GO.

HE WOULD PICK NOW TO DIE.

HE JUST WOULD.

MOVE NOW OR DIE.

NOT BAD ADVICE--

KRAKOA

KOFF
...KIND OF A JERK JUST GRABS A MAN AND TOSSES HIM IN THE AIR?
KOFF
YOU DID GOOD, KID.
KNOCKED THE THING OUT.
YOU SHOULD BE PROUD.
OH, SHOULD I? WOW. JEEZ-- *THANKS,* MISTER.
MEAN SO MUCH COMING FROM--UM-- I'M SORRY--

"...WHO THE *HELL* ARE YOU?"

THE MONSTER'S BLOOD IS BEING PROCESSED NOW--

HOPEFULLY IT'LL OFFER A CLUE AS TO WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH.

Project Rebirth

I'D LIKE TO RUN IT AGAINST SOME DNA SAMPLES FROM SPIDER-MAN...

...BUT I DON'T HAVE ANY.

THOMPSON WAS THE CHAIRMAN OF HIS FAN CLUB--MAYBE HE HAS A "*DNA SAMPLE*"?

FUNNY.

LOT OF OTHER FOLKS HE COULD BE DERIVED FROM--SPIDER-WOMAN, SPIDER-GIRL, SPIDER-CLAM, SPIDER-CHICKEN...

THAT FIGHT GREW YOU A SENSE OF HUMOR. YOU FEELIN' OKAY?

YEAH...BUT I GOT THAT LIONEL RICHIE SONG "*HELLO*" STUCK IN MY HEAD. TOO BAD YOU CAN'T FIGURE OUT A WAY TO USE THAT AS A WEAPON.

WHAT WERE THEY SENDING YOU TO DO, YOU GIANT UGLY SON OF A BITCH?

WHY DON'T YOU SAVE US ALL A LOT OF TROUBLE AND JUST COUGH IT UP.

COUGH IT UP.

LIEUTENANT MCKENZIE, A LARGE PORTION OF THE POPULATION OF MANHATTAN IS DEVELOPING SUPER-HUMAN SPIDER POWERS.

THIS THING HOLDS THE KEY TO *SOLVING* OUR DILEMMA. QUIT TRADING KNITTING TIPS AND *FIGURE IT THE HELL OUT.*

COUGH IT UP!

HEY!

GLOOK

THIS BASTARD'S UP TO SOMETHING!

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THERE?

I-IT'S...THE SPIDER CREATURE IS VOMITING UP... THOUSANDS OF TINY SPIDERS.

I THINK I KNOW WHY THEY WERE SENDING HIM OUT OF THE CITY...

...HE'S A SPORE SAC--HE'S SPREADING THE VIRUS.

WE ARE FIFTEEN MILES AWAY FROM A HIGHLY POPULATED AREA!

IT DOESN'T MATTER. SHOULDN'T.

NOTHING CAN GET OUT OF THAT CONTAINMENT CHAMBER...

KRETCHH

THAT IS THE WORST THING I'VE EVER SEEN.

AAAA

DOOM DOOM

C'MON-- MY LAB, THE BLAST DOORS ARE DOUBLE THICK-- *HURRY!*

WHERE'S SAMSON? WHERE'S MY DOG?!

CRRROOOM

RWWOOOWRRR!!

GO-GO-GO!!

MOVE!!

I'M TRYING T--

GENERAL! WATCH--

TWOKK

AAK--

GRWWORLLL!!

WE HAVE A BREACH! LOCK DOWN THE PERIMETER!
FULL QUARANTINE! HOSTILE SUPER-HUMAN LOOSE IN SECTION V!
W-WE SPREAD IT...
...SPREAD THE CONTAGION OUT OF THE CITY QUARANTINE...
WE ARE... *BAD* AT THIS JOB.
MCKENZIE, I NEED YOU TO *SHUT UP*. THAT SPIDER THING IS GOING TO BREAK THROUGH THAT DOOR SOON AND I NEED TO KNOW OUR OPTIONS.
OPTIONS? ONLY ONE OPTION--
"KISSING OUR ASSES GOODBYE."
ROOF! ROOF!
ARF?
GGGGRRRRRRRR

THESE SHOTGUNS ARE LOADED WITH ZINC OXIDE ROUNDS DESIGNED TO MELT THROUGH FIVE FEET OF STEEL.

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'LL HURT THAT THING, BUT IF IT WON'T--*NOTHING* WILL.

WITHOUT THE SUIT--

--HELPLESS--

EVEN IF THIS SLOWS DOWN *CHARLOTTE* OUT THERE--

SHOTGUNS *AREN'T GOING TO* STOP THE PLAGUE IT SET LOOSE.

THERE'S ONLY ONE OPTION.

WHAT?! THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, CORPORAL, THERE ARE *FIFTY SOULS* ON SITE!

BASE IS *INFESTED* WITH A *PLAGUE* OF SPIDERS CARRYING AN *UNKNOWN PATHOGEN.*

IF THEY GET OUT, THEY'LL SPREAD. PERIOD.

EVERY ONE OF US KNEW WHAT WE WERE SIGNING ON FOR WITH THIS MISSION, KATHERINE.

WELCOME TO THE HARD PART.

FAKE COURAGE.

THE BASE HAS A FAIL-SAFE, A KILL SWITCH, IN CASE THE SYMBIOTE GOT FREE, YES?

A SONIC-NAPALM SPRINKLER SYSTEM.

IT'S WHAT THE GENERAL WOULD DO--

IT'S WHAT WE'RE DOING. NO AGONIZING-- HOW DO WE ACTIVATE IT?

A-A CONTROL PANEL--

KOOOM

--DOWN THE HALL.

ALL PERSONNEL-- IMPLEMENTING SCORCHED EARTH. GET TO THE NEAREST PANIC ROOM.

I REPEAT WE ARE IMPLEMENTING SCORCHED EARTH--

HERE IT COMES!

DOOOH

IN MY MIND I SAY SOMETHING LIKE "LET IT COME."

I SAY SOMETHING TOUGH--I REALLY SELL IT TOO.

KA-BOOOM

BLAM BLAM BLAM

SKRAK

OOF--!

NOT LIKE THIS--

--NOT ON MY BELLY--

GHHRWAAARR!!

--NOT LIKE THIS--

GGGRRRRRRRRRRR--

RAWOOOOFF!

GHRAGH!

YOU WILL DIE.

YELP!

ALL THE MORE REASON.

KLOOM KLOOM

GRWAAKKK--

AIEE--

HELLO--

KROOOM

--IS IT ME YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

GET HIM OUTSIDE--

--WORRY IF THOSE SPIDERS CAN BITE THROUGH THE SYMBIOTE LATER.

GLOOP

WE *HAVE TO* GET TO ONE OF THE SAFE ROOMS!

DON'T WORRY--I *DISABLED* THE NAPALM SPRINKLER HERE IN MY LAB FIRST DAY I TOOK THIS JOB.

KLOOM KLOOM

SHWIPP

ACID WEBS. I COULD USE THOSE.

STEAL SOME OF HIS.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!

INVESTIGATING THE BLOOD SAMPLES FROM THAT GIANT BASTARD...

...MAYBE I CAN FIND SOMETHING TO GIVE FLASH A LEG UP.

IF THAT'S A LEG JOKE--

GLWIPP

SKLAAM

GRWAKK--

--IT'S IN TERRIBLE TASTE.

I'M OUT OF ROUNDS!

DEAR GOD-- THIS...THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE...

FLASH-- STOP! LISTEN TO ME!

DO NOT HURT HIM!!

NOT GOING TO HURT HIM-- I'M GONNA KILL THIS THING!

NO! YOU DON'T GET IT!

THAT "THING" IS CAPTAIN AMERICA!

WE NEED HIM ALIVE!

OOF

KWOKK

TAKES A SECOND TO REGISTER-- CONSIDER OPTIONS--

A SECOND IS ALL HE NEEDS.

ALIVE--SUCH AN EASY WORD TO SAY--

TWUD

METAL STABS INTO MY SPINE-- THE SHOTGUN--

SLAMM

SAME PLAN--

ADDING IN THE PRESERVATION OF CAPTAIN MONSTER--

BRING THE ENTIRE WALL DOWN-- MIGHT BE COVER ENOUGH--

SMALL CHANCE EITHER OF US ENDS UP ALIVE.

KOOM

GGRRENNNCHHHH

AND SUDDENLY I WANT TO SEE DAD--

--AND SUDDENLY I WANT TO SAY GOODBYE.

WHOOO

Later...

STEVE ROGERS...HOW THE *HELL* DID THEY GET YOU, SON?

THOMPSON, YOU'RE GOING TO USE YOUR SYMBIOTE TO MIMIC HIS FORM, INFILTRATE ENEMY COMMAND, AND FIND OUT WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON.

IF THE MONSTERS WE'RE DEALING WITH CAN DO *THIS* TO *CAPTAIN AMERICA*...

WHEN I GIVE THE WORD--SNAP THE NECK OF WHATEVER SON OF A BITCH DID THIS.

CLEAR.

YOU READY TO GO BACK IN, SON?

SIR, YES, SIR.

DUTY TAKES PRIORITY.

PUSH THE REST TO THE SIDE...

...AND TRY AND FORGET ABOUT IT.

THIS IS FLASH, NOT AVAILABLE TO COME TO THE PHONE, LEAVE A MESSAGE-- BEEEEP.

PLEASE, FLASH THOMPSON...

BE HERE FOR THIS.

IT'S IMPORTANT.

BE HERE.

VENOM #7
"SPIDER-ISLAND PART 2"

Manhattan. GROUND ZERO FOR THE INFESTATION.

--WITH A LARGE PORTION OF THE POPULATION DEVELOPING "SPIDER-POWERS."

NO NEWS YET IF THE MUTATIONS ARE CONNECTED, BUT A PRESS RELEASE ISSUED EARLIER TODAY BY REED RICHARDS OF THE FUTURE FOUNDATION DOES INDICATE SOME LINK.

SHE'S FINE, ANGEL--WE'RE FINE--I'M GLAD YOU WERE EVACUATED--

NO--NO NEED FOR BOTH OF US TO SUFFER THROUGH THIS CRAZINESS.

YES-- SAMANTHA WAS BITTEN. IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD.

EGGHEADS'RE WORKING ON A CURE.

YEAH. I'M WATCHING IT NOW--HOLD ON A SEC...

...AND, YES, WE ARE SEEING A NEW MUTATION IN A SMALL NUMBER OF INFECTED PATIENTS.

IF YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, BEGIN TO PHYSICALLY CHANGE--COME DIRECTLY TO HORIZON LABS.

MASTERS RESCUED FROM

YOUR CARE IS OUR TOP PRIORITY.

KRASH

DR. RICHARDS, WHAT ABOUT THE REPORTS WE'RE HEARING THAT A MAN INSIDE OUR LADY OF SAINTS CHURCH IS OFFERING TO CURE THE INFECTED?

S-SAMANTHA?! HONEY?

PLEASE, IF MUTATIONS SET IN, COME DIRECTLY TO HORIZON LABS.

WHILE PRAYER IS A WONDERFUL SOLACE...

...THIS IS A TIME FOR SCIENCE.

S...SAM?

OUR LADY OF SAINTS-- WHERE IS IT?!

FIVE BLOCKS SOUTH--

EXCUSE ME!

MOVE!

PLEASE!

EXCUSE ME, SIR! PLEASE--

PLEASE CAN YOU HELP MY DAUGHTER?!

YOU DID THE RIGHT THING COMING TO ME.

I AM THE ANTI-VENOM.

SCIENCE CANNOT HEAL THE BLACKNESS THAT IS INFESTING OUR CITY...

...IT IS THE HAND OF GOD THAT MUST DELIVER US NOW.

LET THE LIGHT OF GOD HEAL YOU, MY CHILD!

BE CLEANSED OF THE DARK SPIDER'S CURSE.

REJOIN US IN THE LIGHT!

SAMMY?

M-MY GOD...SHE'S BACK!

YOU SAVED MY LITTLE GIRL!

PRAISE GOD!

A MIRACLE!

HE IS THE CHOSEN ONE.

--MY SON! CAN YOU HELP MY SON?!

Central Park.

AHHH!!

OH, THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL

BUT THE FIRE IS SO DELIGHTFUL

AND SINCE WE'VE NO PLACE TO GO

LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW!

...THE WEATHER DEE DOO FRIGHTFUL...

...DUM DEE DEE DOOT... DELIGHTFUL...

LA DA DEE DA DEE... TO GO...

LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW!

IT'S A MADHOUSE OUT THERE, MILES.

COME INSIDE, MILES.

WE'RE HAVING THE TIME OF OUR LIVES.

MY QUEEN, I HAVE NEWS.

DON'T TELL ME "YOU HAVE NEWS"--JUST TELL ME THE NEWS.

EDWARD BROCK, CURRENT ALIAS ANTI-VENOM...

...HE'S CURING PEOPLE.

I WITNESSED IT.

THEN SOMEONE SHOULD GO KILL HIM, YES?

PLEASE?

PRETTY PLEASE, SOMEONE STEP FORWARD TO SERVE THEIR QUEEN BEFORE SHE BECOMES EXASPERATED--

I WILL.

WHERE IZZZ HE?

OUR LADY OF SAINTS CHURCH.

THANK YOU, SPIDER-KING AND MILES...

BLAMM

...NO MORE BAD NEWS, PLEASE?

KATHERINE, ARE YOU ON THE LINE?

I AM, AGENT VENOM. BUT I'M IN THE DARK--CAN'T PICK ANYTHING UP WHEN YOU'RE IN THAT BUNKER.

SOMEONE HAS A CURE. THE QUEEN WANTS ME TO GO KILL HIM.

ORDERS?

FLASH? D-DID YOU SAY A CURE?

I DID.

AGENT, CAN YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC IN REGARDS TO THIS "MAGIC CURE?"

EDDIE BROCK.

LAST REPORT I READ, HE'D GROWN SOME KIND OF ANTIBODY TO THE SYMBIOTE, AN "ANTI-VENOM."

MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS ABILITY TO CURE FOLKS.

DR. RICHARDS? WE'VE FOUND A CURE.

NONSENSE, AARON, SYNTHESIZING AN ANTIDOTE THIS EARLY ON... SOMEONE IS MISLEADING YOU.

THE CURE LIES WITHIN THE BLOOD OF EDDIE BROCK, ANTI-VENOM. A VIGILANTE WHO--

I KNOW WHO HE IS, SOLDIER.

THE ENTIRE CITY IS FALLING DOWN AROUND OUR EARS.

IF MR. BROCK'S BLOOD CONTAINS A CURE--WE NEED TO GET OUR HANDS ON HIM *IMMEDIATELY.*

UNDERSTOOD, SIR...

"... WE HAVE AN AGENT EN ROUTE TO COLLECT THE TARGET NOW."

FLASH? YOUR DAD'S GETTING WEAKER. WHERE ARE YOU?!

DOING MY BEST TO GET THERE, BETTY.

ENTIRE CITY'S GOING NUTS.

I'M--I'M STUCK WAITING IN LINE AT A MILITARY CORDON ON 42ND-- JUST TRYING TO GET PAST IT.

I'M SURE YOU'RE DOING YOUR BEST, BUT...

I KNOW YOU'RE STILL UPSET--I CAN HEAR IT IN YOUR VOICE--

IF YOUR FATHER DIES BEFORE YOU MAKE AMENDS...

YOU'LL REGRET IT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.

HOLD TIGHT. IT'S MY NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.

LIAR.

EVEN IF I WENT--

WHAT WOULD I SAY?

THANKS FOR ALL THE FUN, DAD.

THANKS FOR BEING A COWARD WHO QUIT HIS FAMILY FOR A BOTTLE.

CLOAK AND DAGGER

READY TO ASSIST YOU

THANKS FOR YOUR CRAZY OUTBURSTS.

THANKS FOR THE BEATINGS.

THANKS FOR LEAVING ME A JUMBLED, MASOCHISTIC, SELF-DOUBTING MESS.

WHY MAKE IT EASY FOR HIM?

LET THE CREEP GO WITH THE SAME SOUR TASTE HE'S LEAVING US WITH.

WE HEAL THROUGH FORGIVENESS, MY FRIENDS...

...I CAN *HEAL* THE VENOM YOU'VE BEEN INFECTED BY.

BUT TO HEAL ALTOGETHER, YOU MUST FORGIVE THE WEAKNESS OF OTHERS. LOVE YOUR FELLOW MAN.

I...I SACRIFICE MY BODY FOR YOU.

THROUGH THIS, I TOO HEAL. I AM THE -KOFF- -HAKK- I AM THE HAND OF GOD.

THE VENOM SYMBIOTE REACTS TO SEEING BROCK.

JILTED.

LONGING SHIFTS RIGHT OVER TO ANGER.

HEH. AIN'T THAT THE TRUTH.

GUN IS LOADED WITH THE SAME HIGH-POWERED SEDATIVES AARON GAVE ME TO KEEP MY SYMBIOTE UNDER CONTROL.

GET CLOSE ENOUGH--

--EMPTY A FEW TRANQ ROUNDS INTO HIM--

--THEN OFF TO HORIZON LABS.

WHO AMONG US HASN'T SINNED? WHO HASN'T FALLEN TO SOME TEMPTATION?

SYMBIOTE REASSURING ME IT DOESN'T NEED HIM.

TELLS ME WE'RE A BETTER TEAM.

I WAS GRANTED ABSOLUTION, AND NOW IT IS MY TURN TO OFFER IT BACK.

BITTERNESS FLOODS US-- ME--

FLOODS MY EMOTIONS

BETRAYED US.

ABANDONED US.

A LIAR.

WE DON'T NEED HIM...

NOW, IT IS MY TURN TO SERVE MANKIND--

--TO STAVE OFF THE DARKNESS HIDING IN OUR MIDST!

FFSHHHH

GHRAGHH!!

YOU?!

YOU DARE COME HERE?!

I WILL NOT BE PULLED BACK DOWN! I AM REBORN IN THE LIGHT!

GAA--!

YYOUU BBELLONG IN THE DDARRK.

KRAKK

KRESH

THMP

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT THING'S DOING TO YOU?

YOU CAN'T OR YOU'D NEVER HAVE ALLOWED IT TO BOND TO YOU.

AND MAKE NO MISTAKE-- IT **CHOSE** YOU.

IT WILL DRINK YOUR SOUL, LEAVING BEHIND ONLY CANCEROUS EXCREMENT.

IT'S NOT A BLACK MONSTER FROM SPACE--

IT'S A BLACK DEMON SENT FROM HELL.

GHRAGHAH--!!

YOU ARE AN ADDICT--A DAMAGED AND WOUNDED ANIMAL-- YOU HAVE A SICKNESS.

I AM THE CURE!

GHRAGHAH

DO NOT STRUGGLE-- YOU WERE DRAWN TO ME BY THE LIGHT OF GOD!

HEAL THROUGH MY FORGIVENESS!

YERAGH--!

GET OFF OF USSS!!

RA-BROOOOOM

KRAKOOM

WHO IS IT YOU'RE TRYING TO FIGHT?

YOU, BROCK.

POOR MISGUIDED LAMB...

THWP

...I KNOW THE PAIN YOU SUFFER.

YOU THINK YOU'RE MAKING CHOICES OF FREE WILL--

YOU'RE NOT.

SHUT UP!

EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE SINCE PUTTING ON THAT SUIT HAS BEEN THE SYMBIOTE'S DECISION.

EVERYTHING.

WOOOSH

YOU MISS IT WHEN IT'S GONE.

COUNTING THE HOURS TO YOUR NEXT FIX.

HE'S WRONG.

WE'RE DIFFERENT...

WE'RE IN CONTROL.

RRRR

YOU SPEND HOURS THINKING ABOUT WHEN YOU'LL GET IT NEXT.

WE'RE IN CONTROL.

I'M NOT YOU, BROCK!

I'M NO SERIAL KILLER!

YOU JUST CALL IT SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

I'M A SOLDIER...A WAR HERO--

A CORPORAL IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

YOU'VE BEEN KILLING, THOUGH, HAVEN'T YOU? TAKING JOY IN IT.

FEED ME!

I'M...I'M THE GOOD GUY...

GOOD GUY... WHO LIED TO GENERAL DODGE.

YOU'VE BEEN LYING.

KEPT CRIME-MASTER'S IDENTITY HIDDEN.

CHEATING.

PUT BETTY IN DANGER.

WATCHING YOUR LIFE SLOWLY RECEDE INTO THE BACKGROUND...

...UNTIL THE SUIT TAKES PRIORITY OVER EVERYTHING ELSE.

HE'S RIGHT.

POISON.

INFECTING ME--

GET OFF OF ME!

NO! NOT AGAIN!

HE'S WEAK FROM RELEASING ALL HIS ANTIBODIES--

WEAK FROM HELPING PEOPLE--

THE SYMBIOTE IS BONDING WITH HIM--

LEAVING ME--

GOOD. LET IT GO--GET RID OF IT--

THE DEMON--GET IT OFF!

NOT AGAIN!

FORGETTING WHY I'M HERE--

IF IT BONDS WITH EDDIE, IT'LL WIPE OUT HIS ANTIBODIES--

--IT'LL WIPE OUT THIS CITY'S LAST CHANCE AT A CURE!

NO! PLEASE-- GOD!

WEE ARRE RETURNEDD!

HHOOME SSSWEET SSYMBIOSSSIS...

C-COME BACK...

HE'LL ALWAYS FIGHT YOU...

LIE...LIE TO IT...

I NEED YOU.

I DON'T...

...A LIE...

COME BACK TO ME--

PLEASE, I NEED YOU.

I DON'T.

...DON'T EVEN WANT IT...

BUT PEOPLE ARE COUNTING ON ME.

USE IT...

JUST THIS ONE LAST TIME.

Horizon Labs.

WOULD YOU LIKE THE OMNIONNE DOCTOR RICHARDS?

BLAST! IF I CAN'T REGULATE THE MOLECULAR RHYTHMS OF THIS SYNTHETIC HISTAMINE THERE'S NO POINT TO OMNIONNE!

+SIGH+ FORGIVE MY TEMPER, IT ISN'T OFTEN I'M OUT-MANEUVERED BY A MANMADE COMPOUND.

DOCTOR RICHARDS? WE HAVE A... GUEST, SIR.

WHO, OFFICER?

I THINK YOU'LL WANT TO SEE FOR YOURSELF.

NYPD

WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE THE GOOD GUYS GOT YOU, BROCK.

YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME CURE THIS CITY, LIKE IT OR NOT.

I'M GLAD TO HELP.

BUT YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT THE MAN WHO BROUGHT ME HERE--

HE IS NO "GOOD GUY."

SHREB

THEN WHY DO I FIND YOU WEBBED UP HERE? WHY DIDN'T YOU COME WILLINGLY IN THE FIRST PLACE?

HE NEVER ASKED ME TO. DIDN'T EVEN TELL ME WHAT HE WANTED.

VENOM JUST SHOWED UP...

"...AND TRIED TO KILL ME."

FLASH...

E-EUGENE...?

I'M HERE, DAD.

B-BEEN THINKING... ABOUT YOU...

WAS REMEMBERING WHEN YOU WERE JUST A BOY...

Y-YOU REMEMBER... FRIDAYS...WHEN YOU WERE SEVEN OR EIGHT...

THE DEN... LISTENING TO OLD JAZZ RECORDS...JUST YOU AND ME.

I REMEMBER, DAD.

JUST ME AN' MY BOY EUGENE, WHO I LOVED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE ON THIS EARTH...

MY BOY...

WHO I ALWAYS LET DOWN.

I'M SORRY, SON.

YOUR SISTER...YOUR MOTHER...YOU TELL 'EM I'M SORRY...I LOVE 'EM.

TELL 'EM HOW SORRY...

YOU DID THE VERY BEST YOU COULD.

THE BAD WAS...

...BAD--IT CASTS A SHADOW ON THE REST--BUT--I LOVE YOU, DAD.

I LOVE YOU AND I'LL TRY MY DAMNEST TO ONLY REMEMBER THE GOOD TIMES, OKAY?

I'LL REMEMBER LISTENING TO RECORDS. YOU AND ME.

I LOVE YOU SO MUCH...AND YOU DID A LOT GOOD.

YOU HEAR ME?

I WOULDN'T TRADE YOU FOR ANY OTHER FATHER.

VENOM #8
"SPIDER-ISLAND PART 3"

Project: Rebirth.

YOUR AGENT WAS SUCCESSFUL.

USING ANTI-VENOM'S WHITE BLOOD CELLS I WAS ABLE TO CREATE A CURE FOR THE VIRUS. YOU SHOULD ALL EXCHANGE HIGH-FIVES IN UNISON.

I'M GLAD WE COULD HELP, DOCTOR.

LIEUTENANT MACKENZIE, WE NEED CAPTAIN AMERICA BACK IN ACTION.

DO YOU HAVE THE COMPONENTS NEEDED TO SYNTHESIZE THE CURE?

FORTUNATELY THE ANTIBODIES NEEDED ARE THE SAME AS ONES IN A VENOM SAMPLE I HAVE.

QUITE CONVENIENT...

YES, WE GOT LUCKY. LIEUTENANT, YOU'RE *CERTAIN* THIS SERUM WON'T KILL HIM?

NOPE.

SGNK

Manhattan.

GENCY.

HEY. YOU HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING IN HOURS.

I KNOW HOW I FELT WHEN I LOST MY MOM.

IT WIPES YOU OUT.

BUT, FLASH--WE'RE STRANDED IN A WAR ZONE.

I NEED YOU TO BE *HERE.*

OKAY.

I'M OKAY.

HERE, BEFORE I FORGET...

WHILE WE WERE WAITING FOR YOU, YOUR FATHER WROTE THIS...IN CASE YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT.

EUGEN

AGENT VENOM, YOU HAVE NEW ORDERS.

FLASH?

WHAT IS IT?

JUST...NEED A MINUTE.

YOU HAVE CLEARANCE TO TERMINATE TARGET, AGENT VENOM.

ELIMINATE THE QUEEN.

DO YOU COPY?

I-- I HAVE TO GO.

WHAT?

THE CITY IS INFESTED.

IF THERE'RE STILL EVACUATION POINTS THERE WON'T BE FOR MUCH LONGER.

I'M GOING TO FIND ONE, GET YOU OUT OF HERE.

STAY IN THIS ROOM--BAR THE DOOR--SHOOT *ANYTHING* THAT CAN'T TELL YOU ITS NAME.

Y-YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE ME... *HERE?*

IT'S SAFER IN HERE. TAKE MY GUN.

YOU KNOW HOW TO USE IT.

I'LL FIND AN EVAC AND BE RIGHT BACK.

ARE YOU SURE YOU SHOULD BE THE ONE TO GO?

FLASH, THIS IS CRAZY, YOU'RE... I MEAN, YOU'RE...

A CORPORAL IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE GOING TO SAY NEXT. RIGHT, BETTY?

Eugene, I hope you're well.

I hope the crazy business outside is wrapped up, as it always is, and that you aren't injured.

I want to give you my thoughts while Im lucid.

In case we don't see each other again.

My doctor just informed me I won't see tomorrow.

No moment in your life can prepare you for those words.

I wasn't prepared, tell you that.

Thankfully, your mother and sister are safely home in Queens, and I have your lovely girlfriend by my side.

Betty is a charming woman, so much character and warmth.

My opinions don't probably deserve any consideration in your plans.

But marry this girl, or it will be the great mistake of your life.

...TO THE REST. IN OTHER NEWS, THE PRESIDENT HAS ALERTED ALL ACTIVE AVENGERS TO RETURN TO THE AREA...

MORE AVENGERS.

WHY NOT?

The Queen's Lair.

BELOW CENTRAL PARK.

WITH NO NEWS COMING OUT OF THE CITY, MANY SPECULATE EVERYONE WITHIN HAS BEEN AFFLICTED BY THE TRANSFORMATION.

MEDIA BIAS... *"AFFLICTED"* IMPLIES SOMETHING UNFORTUNATE HAS BEFALLEN THE *LUCKY DUCKIES.*

I haven't always made things easy for you, Eugene.

I imagine it was pretty hard to have me for a dad.

KRITCCH

And it hurts like hell.

HMMH.

=WHIMPER=

And there's no way I can ever fix it.

I've been a mean son of a bitch.

LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO ME

IT APPEARS THE GOOD PROFESSOR'S PREDILECTION TOWARDS CLONING FORMER STUDENTS DOESN'T MAKE FOR A DECENT MANICURIST, DOES IT, MR. THOMPSON?

You came into this Earth a smiling baby boy who brought joy to our house...

...But I changed that.

Gave you the pain and rage that my old man inflicted on me.

Taught you the same fear and mistrust.

I DON'T HAVE POSITIONS AVAILABLE FOR "CLUMSY."

I know there's nothing I can say to change the lasting effects my rage will have on your life.

BLAMM

IMPOLITE

Yet somehow--

--through it all--

GOING TO BORROW THIS FOR A SEC

--you found the greatness within you--

OUI-OUI

NO!

BLAMM!!!

SKREE!

--You found your own way--

KLOOOM

WELL, YOU BOTCHED THAT UP

IT'S BECAUSE YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ME. NO PERSONAL INVESTMENT IN SEEING ME DIE

MIND ELSEWHERE. YOU'RE A SOLDIER WITH ORDERS. THIS IS WORK FOR YOU.

--BUT THIS IS MY LIFE.

I AM PROFOUNDLY INVESTED.

SERVING YOUR COUNTRY FEELS SO NOBLE, DOESN'T IT?

WWOOOOSH

IN WORLD WAR II, THERE WERE VERY FEW WOMEN IN THE MARINES.

I JOINED ANYWAY.

TWOK

KRUCHH

YOU CAN'T IMAGINE THE PRICE I PAID TO SERVE MY COUNTRY

KRAKOOM

CRY ME A RIVER, LADY.

THEY REPAID ME WITH INVOLUNTARY RADIATION TESTING

PUT ME IN AN ASYLUM-- THE CAVALCADE OF MISOGYNISTS AND PERVERTS YOU CAN IMAGINE.

BUT WHEN MY POWERS BEGAN TO EMERGE--

PAKK

--THEY ALL PAID.

SKKRREEEEEEEEE

SKWURP

GOVERNMENT IS A MOB

+CHOKK+

AND WE ALL KNOW THAT WHEN A BAND OF HUMANS WANT TO GET AWAY WITH SOMETHING TERRIBLE-- THEY FORM A MOB.

I WILL ERADICATE ALL GOVERNMENTS.

DO AWAY WITH THESE PROTECTIVE BARRIERS GUARDING THE INDIVIDUAL FROM ACCOUNTABILITY.

ALL WILL BE ONE IN THE WEB. YOU WON'T BE HERE TO SEE IT.

Here's the difference between you and me, son...

GGRRAHH!

SHNKK

I would've collapsed after suffering the loss of my legs.

NOW?! NOW YOU SUDDENLY SHOW STONES YOU SPINELESS TICK?

It only made you stronger.

More determined.

OOF--!

C'MON, GET IT TOGETHER-- I NEED YOU!

You never let your demons get the better of you like I did.

DAD'S LETTER...

You were always there for your family...

And for your country.

GOOD NEWS, YOU GET TO DIE KNOWING WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO BE A MAN.

SKKREE--!

...FITTINGLY UNDER THE BOOT OF A QUEEN.

KRUCHH

NOW... WHERE'S OUR NEW FRIEND GONE AND RUN OFF TO?

I never told you how proud you made me.

Marry Betty.

Have children.

C'MON! WAKE UP, YOU COLD BASTARD!

WE JUST NEED A MINUTE--CATCH UP--JUST NEED--

--A MINUTE OF PEACE.

SSKRREEEE!!

YERAGHH!!

CHOMMPP

It's a cliché, but family is everything.

Love yours for all they're worth.

SSHKGRUUB

GHRAGH!

I know you will.

Doctor's here, have to cut this short.

Learn from my mistakes-- get it right.

GLORRFF

I love you, Sonnyboy.

More than I ever knew how to show.

SCIMPER-SCAMPER

YOU CAN'T GET TOO FAR SOLDIER

WHERE HAVE YOU GONE?

THERE'S SO MUCH MORE TO DISCUSS.

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH.

I'VE PAID ENOUGH FOR YOUR CRAZY SCHEME.

THWIPP

MURGLE

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.

KWADOOM

NOT YET

I HAVEN'T HAD SUCH A NICE DATE SINCE... FOREVER.

STILL, I WAGED WAR ON YOUR COUNTRY, TOOK OVER NEW YORK...

BETTY IS LOCKED IN A HOSPITAL ROOM...

IS IT CRAZY THAT I'M A TAD OFFENDED YOU WERE ALL THEY COULD MUSTER, SOLDIER?

CITY IS OVERRUN...

...THE SPIDERS WILL FIND HER.

SSKREEEEE

SHE WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER...

THERE. A LOOK AT THAT HANDSOME, HANDSOME FACE.

=KOFF= STOP =HACK= =KOFF=

BETTY HAS ENOUGH AMMO TO TAKE DOWN TWO...

MAYBE THREE...

STILL, A SMIDGEN TOO IMPUDENT.

KLUDD

HOOF--

IF I CAN'T GET UP...

...IF I DON'T GET BACK TO HER...

BETTER-- HUMBLE.

SO MUCH SEXIER THIS WAY SOLDIER.

THERE'S INTIMACY TO TAKING A LIFE.

TO BE THE LAST FACE A MAN WILL EVER SEE.

THE CLOSEST BOND TWO PEOPLE CAN SHARE.

IT'S AROUSING

WOKK

THIS GETS ME PURRING. GETS ME REVVED UP MORE THAN TAKING OVER THE ENTIRE CITY DID.

TO MOUNT YOU. TO DOMINATE YOU. TO BE THE LAST WOMAN YOU'LL EVER TOUCH.

-HWOKK-

DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT, QUEEN...

...CENTRAL PARK HAS RULES ABOUT PUBLIC FORNICATION...

...AND WE'VE GOT A FIGHT TO FINISH.

KWUNKK

SO MANY HANDSOME MEN VYING FOR MY AFFECTIONS.

FORTUNATELY BOYS, MY APPETITE IS VORACIOUS.

YOU SEEM UPSET, FINDING ME STRADDLING ANOTHER SOLDIER.

DON'T BE JEALOUS STEVEN.

TWUP

KWUD

SKRAK

TWOK

YOU'LL ALWAYS BE MY FIRST

WOOF--!

I DON'T WANT YOU TO USE PROTECTION.

TWUMP

GOOD. DON'T HOLD BACK.

BAD

GIVE ME ALL YOU HAVE.

SKAKK

KYOK

YES. SATISFY ME.

DWAP

OH, STEVE. YOU ARE TRULY ONE OF A KIND.

YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A WOMAN. YOU MAKE ME FEEL INCREDIBLE...

DON'T GET TOO USED TO THAT.

SHUNK

GAA--

HER FAULT.

AKK GAKK--

WASN'T WITH HIM.

HER FAULT BETTY'S IN DANGER.

SHE'S DEAD.

I DIDN'T WANT TO-- T-THEY TOLD ME SHE HAD TO DIE =KOFF= TO STOP IT ALL.

MAYBE SHE DID, SON. SHE DIDN'T LEAVE MANY OPTIONS.

YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO.

NO TIME FOR REGRET IN WAR.

YEAH, THE REGRET IS--WHAT THE--?!

OH, MAN...

THE FUTURE-- I CAN SEE IT--!

I WAS SO FRIGHTENED I WOULD MISS IT!

THE ALL IS NOW!!

HOLD YOUR HEADS LOW! I OFFER MERCY TO THOSE WITH VISION.

ACCEPT THE SPIRIT OF THE SPIDER!

DO NOT FEAR THE FUTURE! STRANDED, ALONE, KNOCKING HEADS AS YOU STUMBLE THROUGH IT ALL.

YOUR WORLD IS LOST--BUT I WILL BRING YOU THE NEW--

I AM YOUR SPIDER-QUEEN!

OKAY.

I REGRET IT.

SOLDIER? YOU STILL WITH ME?

ALWAYS.

ALL RIGHT THEN. ROUND TWO!

In *Amazing Spider-Man #672*, the conclusion of "Spider-Island," Venom battled the monstrous Queen and her minions alongside the Avengers and X-Men. Spider-Man's clone Kaine slew the Queen, while Spider-Man cured New York City's mutated citizens using Anti-Venom's antibodies. Venom, still reeling from his father's death, must now protect Manhattan's suddenly human populace against those who would profit from their confusion...

VENOM #9
"CAPITAL PUNISHMENT"

I'VE TAKEN *BEATINGS* IN MY LIFE.

HAD BODY AND MIND PUT TO THE TEST.

FOOTBALL.

DAD.

BOOT CAMP.

MOSUL.

BOTH LEGS AMPUTATED ABOVE THE KNEE.

AN ENTIRE *LIFETIME* OF GETTING MY *ASS KICKED* TO THE GROUND CAN'T *BEGIN* TO MEASURE UP TO THESE PAST TWELVE HOURS.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

DAD...

HAVEN'T HAD A MOMENT TO ABSORB IT.

HAVEN'T TOLD MOM OR JESSIE.

I CAN'T. CAN'T BE THE ONE.

HAVE TO FIND HER. SOMEHOW IN ALL OF THIS CRAZINESS. DEAR GOD, LET ME FIND HER...

BETTY...

LEFT HER IN HIS HOSPITAL ROOM--

LEFT HER ALONE IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL OF THIS.

VIRUS WENT AIRBORNE.

NO WAY SHE ESCAPED IT.

DEAR GOD LET HER BE OKAY.

EVEN IF SHE IS...

N.Y.

"...JUST LET HER BE OKAY."

CRAZY. RIDICULOUS CITY.

MOM, DAD, THEY ALL WARNED ME, MOVING TO NEW YORK WAS A DEATH WISH.

BUT NO, RON IS GOING TO BE AN ACTOR.

GOING TO MAKE A GO IN THE BIG CITY.

BEEN LYING TO THEM FOR SO LONG, BUT WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO SAY? I'M LIVING IN A MOLDY CLOSET AND GRINDING IT OUT AS A SECURITY GUARD?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, MOM, NOTHING TO REPORT THIS WEEK--

MAYBE I WAS JUST TURNED INTO A GIANT SPIDER AND WOKE UP BUCK NAKED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET.

NO. SHE DOESN'T NEED TO KNOW.

THINGS'LL GET BETTER.

THEY CAN'T GET MUCH...

KROOOM

THREE BANKS IN TWENTY MINUTES AND *THE HIJACKER* IS JUST GETTIN' STARTED!

BE HOME AND RICH BEFORE THE COPS FIND THEIR PANTS.

YOU RAN THAT MAN OVER.

YOU DIDN'T EVEN SLOW DOWN!

ONE OF MANY TODAY, HERO.

DO YOUR WORST--BETTER THAN IF YOU'VE TRIED TO GET INTO MY IMPENETRABLE TANK--

NONE HAVE SUCCEEDED!

GRRRRRRRRRR

KATHERINE, YOU THERE?!

GIVEN THAT WE HAD JUST SAVED NEW YORK I ASSUMED YOU'D STAY OUT OF TROUBLE FOR FIFTEEN MIN--

GET A SATELLITE ON ME NOW AND GIVE ME INTEL ON THIS TANK!

SON OF A--

--RUN!

OUT OF MY WAY, YOU--

MOVE YOUR ASS--

OKAY-- TROUBLEMAKER'S NAME IS THE HIJACKER.

IMPENETRABLE TANK EQUIPPED WITH COUNTLESS WEAPONS, GAS, GUNS.

NO KIDDING.

MAIN PERSONAL WEAPON IS A GUN THAT DISPENSES NUCLEAR FLAME.

KROMCHH

AGENT VENOM, YOUR SYMBIOTE CANNOT SURVIVE A HIT FROM THAT GUN.

AGENT VENOM? ARE YOU THERE--?

KROOOOM

BUSY.

JUMPED IN LIKE A ROOKIE--

--IGNORED MY TRAINING--

--SENT HIM RUNNING.

PANICKING--OUT OF CONTROL

THAT DEAD SECURITY GUARD--

--NEEDLESS--

SET ME OFF, REDLINING--

KILL THIS SON OF A BITCH--

KRASHHOOOOM

TOOOM

STOP-- CALM DOWN--

CONTROL YOUR ANGER, STUPID--

GET IN FRONT OF THAT TANK--

GET IN FRONT OF IT BEFORE--

MOM...

--OH, NO--

MOVE, OUTTA THE WAY!

NO!

OHMI--

THE MOMENT--

IT HANGS--

--FROZEN--

--FOR A MILLION YEARS.

WON'T GO AWAY.

THE MOMENT HANGS THERE.

THEN WE WAKE UP.

OKAY, OKAY, N-NOT YOUR FAULT--

PEDESTRIANS GET HURT EVERY DAY--TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS ACCOUNT FOR MOST UNNATURAL DEATHS--

COULD'VE HAPPENED CROSSING THE ROAD--

JUST GET ENOUGH SPEED-- GET TO THE TUNNELS--THEY'LL NEVER FIND--

RRRHHOOORRRR!!

DOOOOOM

GRAGH!

WHAT THE--?! VENOM?!

THAT GUY WAS VENOM?! IF IT WEREN'T FOR BAD LUCK--

BEEEP

GRRAAAK!!

GGGGAAZZAK

MMMOVVE!

RRUNN!

WHOOMP

Cataret, New Jersey.
Later.

SUCCESS!

ALL THESE YEARS OF STRUGGLING--BEING A NOBODY--*ALL OVER!*

DUMPED EVERY SINGLE PENNY I EVER HAD INTO THIS TANK--BUT IT'S FINALLY PAID OFF! *HA-HA!*

I HAVE ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD.

TOO BADD...

...YYOU'LL NEEVVER GEET TTO SPPENDD ITT.

SHENK

GAA--

YREAGH!

I COULD TAKE HIM TO THE COPS--

VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER, FLEEING THE SCENE OF A CRIME--

TWOOOOM

MY FINGERS!

--HE'D GET *LIFE* IN JAIL.

BUT HE DOESN'T *DESERVE* LIFE *ANYWHERE.*

YOU BROKE OFF MY FINGERS!

KG

THAT MOTHER AND HER SON LIE DEAD IN TIMES SQUARE.

EVERYTHING TAKEN AWAY FROM THEM.

EVERY BIRTHDAY PARTY.

EVERY BEDSIDE STORY.

EVERY DAY AT THE BEACH.

=HOKK= =KOFF= PLEASE...

KRUM

A FATHER WILL NEVER TEACH HIS BOY TO PLAY FOOTBALL.

SEE HIS FIRST DATE.

HIS WEDDING.

THEIR LIVES ERADICATED FROM EXISTENCE.

KRRNGHH

GRAGHH!

BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE RICH.

KRITTCH

BBEGG UUSSS...

PLEASE... I...I DON'T WANT TO DIE... PLEASE...

ANYTHING... A-ANYTHING YOU WANT... PLEASE...

SMALL JUSTICE.

PTTHUI--

HE DIES IN TERROR.

SMALL JUSTICE.

FLASH?

FLASH? HEY.

HEY.

HMM?

OH-- OH, GOD-- BETTY!

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? I WAS SO WORRIED.

DID YOU... DID YOU CHANGE INTO...

A MONSTER.

I WOKE UP, BUCK NAKED, IN THE STREETS WITH A COUPLE OF OTHER THOUSAND PEOPLE.

I'M GUESSING I WAS TURNED INTO ONE OF THOSE SPIDERS.

WERE YOU...?

THERE WAS A UTILITY ROOM--I *BOLTED* THE DOOR, LOCKED MYSELF IN.

YOU'RE TOO DAMN RESOURCEFUL FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, BRANT.

YOU FOUND A NICE LITTLE HIDEY-HOLE WHILE I ENDED UP GETTING SWALLOWED UP.

IT WAS VERY *BRAVE* OF YOU TO GO OUT THERE LOOKING FOR AN EVACUATION COPTER.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT YOU.

HAVE YOU TALKED TO YOUR MOTHER YET? D-DOES SHE KNOW?

NOT YET.

I'VE BEEN SITTING WITH IT... CAN'T PICK UP THE PHONE. HOW DO I TELL HER SHE'LL NEVER GET TO SAY GOODBYE?

HOW DO I TELL BETTY WHAT I'VE BECOME?

IT'S A GOOD THING HE HAD ME WRITE OUT THOSE LETTERS.

LOST IT-- I NEVER GOT TO READ IT.

THE ONE I GAVE YOU WAS CLEANED UP A BIT, I WANTED IT TO BE NICE FOR YOU.

BUT I HAVE THE ORIGINAL DRAFT.

IT'S IN MY SHORTHAND, SO I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I READ IT TO YOU.

YEAH, OKAY.

"EUGENE, I HOPE YOU'RE WELL.

"I HOPE THE CRAZY BUSINESS OUTSIDE IS WRAPPED UP, AS IT ALWAYS IS, AND THAT YOU AREN'T INJURED."

"I WANT TO GIVE YOU MY THOUGHTS WHILE I'M LUCID.

"IN CASE WE DON'T SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN."

"MY DOCTOR JUST INFORMED ME I WON'T SEE TOMORROW.

"NO MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE CAN PREPARE YOU FOR THE MOMENT BEFORE YOU DIE..."

"...I WASN'T PREPARED, I CAN TELL YOU THAT."

VENOM #10
"ROAD TRIP PART ONE"

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO HIM, O LORD.

AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON HIM.

MAY HIS SOUL, AND THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED, THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD REST IN PEACE.

SON OF A BITCH SHOWED UP AS I GAVE MY FATHER'S EULOGY.

Queens Hill Cemetery.

PRACTICED ALL NIGHT, TO DO RIGHT BY THE MAN WHO RAISED ME.

LEAVE THINGS CLEAN.

MOVE PAST THE DAMAGE.

TOOK EVERYTHING I HAD TO GET UP THERE, IN FRONT OF THEM ALL--THEIR KNOWING GLANCES--I WALKED TO THE FRONT OF THAT CHURCH...

AND THERE *HE* WAS.

TEN FEET AWAY.

HARRISON THOMPSON, MAY YOU REST IN PEACE.

AMEN.

EVERYONE TOLD ME MY EULOGY WAS WONDERFUL.

I GUESS I MANAGED TO PULL IT OFF.

BUT FOR ME, THE MOMENT WILL ALWAYS STICK ON ONE IMAGE...

...THE JACK O' LANTERN'S CROOKED, BROKEN SMILE.

AMEN.

AND YOU'RE *SURE* YOU DON'T WANT PEOPLE AT THE HOUSE?

WE COULD PICK UP SOME FOOD...

HMM? NO, THAT'S FINE...WE'RE FINE.

JUST FAMILY, PETE. FOR TODAY.

YOU AND MJ ARE GREAT FOR EVEN COMING.

SURE. BUT CALL FOR ANYTHING. DAY OR NIGHT.

EXCUSE ME, *EUGENE*.

I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND MY SHOWING UP.

WHEN I HEARD THE BAD NEWS, WELL, I FIGURED I'D COME PAY MY *RESPECTS*.

YOU MUST BE BETTY. I'VE HEARD *SO* MUCH ABOUT YOU.

I'M AFRAID YOU HAVE ME AT A LOSS. YOU ARE...?

JACK. *EUGENE* AND I SERVED TOGETHER IN MOSUL. WHICH IS WHY I'M *SO* PRETTY NOW.

YOUR MAN HERE...HE SAVED MY LIFE.

I--I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.

WELL, THAT'S THE THING ABOUT A HERO LIKE *EUGENE*.

HE PROBABLY DIDN'T TELL YOU ABOUT A LOT OF PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES HE SAVED. PROBABLY KEEPS A *LOT* OF SECRETS.

PROBABLY DIDN'T TELL YOU THAT HE'S MY SPONSOR IN *ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS* EITHER, *DID HE?*

WHAT A MENSCH.

I APPLY DISCRETION IN REGARDS TO THE PROGRAM, JACK.

I THOUGHT WE AGREED TO KEEP OUR RELATIONSHIP *PRIVATE*.

NO NEED. NOT BETWEEN *FRIENDS*.

I'M SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS. I KNOW THIS IS PROBABLY THE *WORST* TIME TO ASK THIS, BUT...

I'M IN A DAMN HARD SPOT.

COULD REALLY USE A FRIEND RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

I'M SORRY, JACK.

NOW ISN'T THE *BEST* TIME FOR ME.

I RECOMMEND YOU HIT UP A MEETING, WE'LL FIND ANOTHER TIME TO TALK.

I'LL TAKE YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR SISTER BACK TO THE HOUSE.

GO. SOUNDS LIKE HE NEEDS YOU.

LADY, IT WOULD MEAN THE *WORLD* TO ME.

WHO KNOWS...?

"...YOU MIGHT EVEN BE SAVING A LIFE."

OH, MAN. THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE...

...YOU WANTED TO KILL ME.

I'M GOING TO.

BEEP BEEP BEEP

CLEAN.

LISTEN, JUST LET'S KEEP OUR *LAST* ENCOUNTER BETWEEN US.

DADDY-O, HE DOESN'T NEED TO KNOW I LOST HIS *VIBRANIUM* WHILE TRYING TO KILL YOU.*

SEE VENOM #4.

SO, IF YOU LIKE BETTY-- AND SHE IS VERY PRETTY *ALIVE*--JUST KEEP YOUR LIPS SEALED, BELINDA.

HEY, JACK.

GRACIE! HOW'S TRICKS?

YOU KNOW. CRIME-MASTER'S GOT ME STUCK IN A TUBE ALL DAY.

LET'S MEET WHEN YOU GET OFF.

WE CAN TURN THAT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

YOU GONNA BRING YOUR HANDSOME FRIEND?

WHO? SOURPUSS?

HE HATES FUN IN ALL INCARNATIONS. IT'S WHY GOD TOOK HIS LEGS AWAY.

FLASH, MY BOY...

...THAT WAS A BIT TOO JOVIAL, WASN'T IT?

CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, *DEATH* IN THE FAMILY, WHAT-HAVE-YOU.

FORGIVE MY *INSENSITIVITY*.

MY CONDOLENCES, BUDDY.

RIGHT. WE'RE NOT FRIENDS, ARE WE?

LET'S GET TO IT, YES?

I NEED YOUR "ALTER EGO" TO DO A LITTLE WORK.

AND IF I DO THIS "*WORK*," YOU'LL LEAVE ME ALONE?

OH, GOD NO. NO. PROBABLY NOT.

HONESTLY, I'LL HAVE MANY MORE JOBS FOR YOU, SPORT.

I LIKE THE WAY YOU ***PRETEND*** NOT TO KNOW THE ***DEAL*** HERE. ***SAVVY*** NEGOTIATOR.

THE ***REAL DEAL*** ISN'T ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GIVEN, THE ***REAL DEAL*** IS WHAT YOU GET TO ***KEEP***.

YOUR ***MOTHER***.

BETTY.

EVERYONE YOU KNOW.

I'LL ALLOW THEM ALL TO CONTINUE ***LIVING***.

SIMPLY ACQUIRE YOUR SYMBIOTE, HEAD TOWARDS *LAS VEGAS.*

YOUR SUIT WILL KNOW WHAT I WANT WHEN YOU GET THERE.

I COULD KILL HIM RIGHT NOW.

EASY PEASY, RIGHT?

NECK WIDE OPEN.

TWIST HIS HEAD BACK AND OFF--

CLEAN BREAK.

GOONS WOULD GUN ME DOWN.

JACK WOULD KILL BETTY.

NOT THE RIGHT TIME.

SOON.

SO, ANYWAY YOU'RE ALL *PISSED OFF* NOW, YOU JUST *BURIED* YOUR DAD, YOU'RE BEING *BLACKMAILED* AND YOUR FAMILY *THREATENED.*

SOON.

COLLECT YOURSELF--FIND WHAT I WANT--BRING IT BACK.

AS VENOM.

HOW DO I FIND YOU?

WE'LL KNOW WHEN YOU'RE BACK IN TOWN. WE'LL BE IN TOUCH.

JACK--SEE HIM OUT--PLAY NICE.

LOUD AN' CLEAR, DADDY-O.

GET THEM ALL IN THE SAME ROOM.

KILL EVERY ONE OF 'EM.

Project Rebirth, The Next Day...

WELL, THEY SURE GOT THE PLACE BACK UP AND RUNNING FAST.

SURE, THOMPSON. WE ASK FOR FUNDS, WE GET THEM. THEY CAN'T REALLY ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS.

PRIVACY CLAUSE IS ONE OF THE PERKS OF THE PROGRAM.

A GOOD THING, CONSIDERING THAT WE BROUGHT A WALKING *SPORE SAC* THROUGH A CORDON AND ALMOST SPREAD A MUTAGEN VIRUS WORLDWIDE.

THE *REAL* SHAME IS THAT I CAN'T TELL *MY* GIRLFRIEND THE STORY.

MILLIONS OF SPIDERS, ME WITH A SHOTGUN FULL OF ZINC OXIDE--MIGHT MAKE HER LOOK PAST MY PONYTAIL.

HELL, YOU BEAT CAPTAIN AMERICA'S *ASS*. YOU GOTTA BE JUST *ITCHING* TO TELL THAT TO BETTY.

EVEN IF I COULD TELL HER WHAT I DO, I'D PROBABLY LEAVE OUT THE TIME THAT I ALMOST KILLED THE GOLD STANDARD DEFINITION OF THE WORD "*HERO*."

GREW UP WATCHING CAP FIGHT FOR THIS COUNTRY.

HE'S A HUGE INFLUENCE, ONE OF THE REASONS I JOINED THE ARMY.

DIDN'T GET THE CHANCE TO TELL HIM DURING ALL THE CRAZY BUSINESS...

YOU MIGHT JUST GET A SECOND SHOT AT YOUR PATRIOTIC LOVE EXCHANGE...

"...YOUR BOYFRIEND'S BACK."

I-- I GUESS YOU'RE CLEARED, SIR.

THANK YOU.

CAPTAIN AMERICA.

TO WHAT OCCASION DO WE OWE THE *PLEASURE* OF THIS SURPRISE-- AND HIGHLY CHAPERONED-- VISIT?

NO PLEASURE, GENERAL DODGE.

I'VE COME TO SHUT DOWN YOUR PROJECT REBIRTH.

I EXPECT FULL COOPERATION.

THAT IS YOUR HERO, COME TO SHUT DOWN THE PROGRAM THAT STOPPED *HIM* FROM SPREADING A DAMNED VIRUS THAT WOULD'VE TURNED THE *ENTIRE WORLD* INTO *SPIDERS*.

PIOUS ASS.

FORTUNATELY, OUR CLEARANCE AND PROTOCOL ALLOW FOR AGGREGATE PRIVACY AND *AMNESTY*.

I HAVE A SELF-DESTRUCT VIRUS SET TO ERODE ALL *PROJECT: VENOM* FILES AND ANY-THING LINKING IT TO...

...FLASH?

THE VENOM SYMBIOTE IS TOO DANGEROUS TO BE USED AS A *TOOL*. IT'S COMING WITH ME.

WHERE?

TOP-SECRET NEW AVENGERS STATION WITH AN IMPENETRABLE CONTAINMENT CELL BUILT SPECIFICALLY FOR IT.

BETTER UNDER THE WATCH OF *COSTUMED HEROES* THAN THE U.S. MILITARY?

I'M BOTH. I'M SORRY, BUT THIS PROJECT SHOWS A *SEVERE* LACK OF JUDGMENT, GENERAL.

I DON'T RECALL YOU BEING AS INCENSED WHEN *AGENT VENOM* STOPPED YOU FROM SPREADING THAT PLAGUE, *CAPTAIN*.

OH, HEY, LOOK--IF IT ISN'T CAPTAIN AMERICA.

HERE TO THANK VENOM FOR SAVING YOUR LIFE, NO DOUBT.

BAD NEWS THOUGH, ALPHAMAN.

THE GUY YOU WANTED TO THANK, HIS *IDENTITY* IS *CONFIDENTIAL*, PROTECTED UNDER AMNESTY INTERTWINED IN OUR PROGRAM'S BYLAWS.

PLUS, I JUST *DELETED* EVERY SINGLE FILE IN THE PLACE.

AND WORSE STILL...

"...AGENT VENOM IS ALREADY LONG GONE, BROTHER."

SUPER *SMART*, THOMPSON. AWOL WITH THE WORLD'S MOST DANGEROUS WEAPON...

JUST BORROWING IT.

THEY WERE GOING TO TAKE IT AWAY.

NOT WHY I'M DOING THIS--

CRIME-MASTER SITUATION--

NO OTHER OPTIONS.

HAS TO BE *DEALT* WITH.

STILL TIME--

--TURN AROUND--

TAKE IT BACK.

WITHOUT THE SYMBIOTE, I CAN'T PROTECT MY FAMILY.

CRIME-MASTER WOULD KILL BETTY.

WITHOUT THE SUIT I'M JUST--

TWIPP

--I'M NOTHING.

ONE LAST MISSION--

THEN RETURN THE SYMBIOTE.

NO MORE DELIBERATION.

TWO WAYS THIS CAN GO DOWN, SON.

...I'D PREFER THE EASY ONE.

I *NEED* THE SYMBIOTE. LIVES ARE ON THE LINE.

YOU HAVE TO *TRUST ME.*

IT'S THAT ROTTEN ALIEN I DON'T TRUST.

YOU *THINK* YOU HAVE IT UNDER CONTROL-- A FRIEND OF MINE DID, TOO--UNTIL HE *DIDN'T.*

I *WON'T* LET YOU TAKE IT.

THEN WE'RE AT AN IMPASSE.

BECAUSE I *WON'T* LET YOU STOP ME.

TWUNG

TACK ON "ASSAULTING CAPTAIN AMERICA" TO MY CHARGES.

WORST PART--

HE'S *RIGHT.*

KWUNKK

OFF--

LISTEN TO ME, SOLDIER-- *WHATEVER* THE TROUBLE IS-- I CAN HELP YOU.

BUT GOING *AWOL*--

SHLLAP

YOU'LL NEVER OUTRUN THE *LAW* OR THE *DISHONOR.*

ONLY SEES A CRIMINAL.

NO MATTER WHAT I DO.

NO MATTER WHAT I SAY.

TWUNKK

ALL HE SEES IS THE SYMBIOTE.

THWIPP

BEEN *TRYING* TO TELL YOU--

AKK--!

IF THE CHOICE IS BETWEEN *DISHONOR* AND PROTECTING MY *FAMILY*...

SKRAKK

...IT'S *NO* CHOICE AT ALL...

...SIR.

LETTING MYSELF GET ANGRY--

--HIT HIM TOO HARD--

NO--

HE'S OUT COLD--

--FREEFALLING--

--WON'T SURVIVE--

IF I LISTEN CLOSE--

--I CAN HEAR IT--

--THE SYMBIOTE LAUGHING.

PRAY IT HOLDS--

THWIPP

THOMPSON PULLS ANOTHER FAMOUS HAIL MARY PLAY.

WOOOOSHH

HEY, WAKE UP.

MY LIST OF CRIMES IS ADDING UP--

KLUNG

ARGH!

THE ORIGINAL SUPER-SOLDIER SHOULD BE ABLE TO SURVIVE A TWENTY-FOOT DROP.

STILL, NOT SURE IF ATTEMPTING TO *KILL* CAPTAIN AMERICA IS A CRIME IF I ENDED UP *SAVING* HIM.

GUESS I'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.

DID ANYONE PUT EYES ON HIM?

HE CAME BACK HERE.

GOOD. OUR CHAT GOT THROUGH TO HIM.

WHERE IS HE NOW? I'D LIKE TO HAVE WORDS.

I'M SORRY, SIR, HE IS... *NO LONGER* HERE.

WHAT?

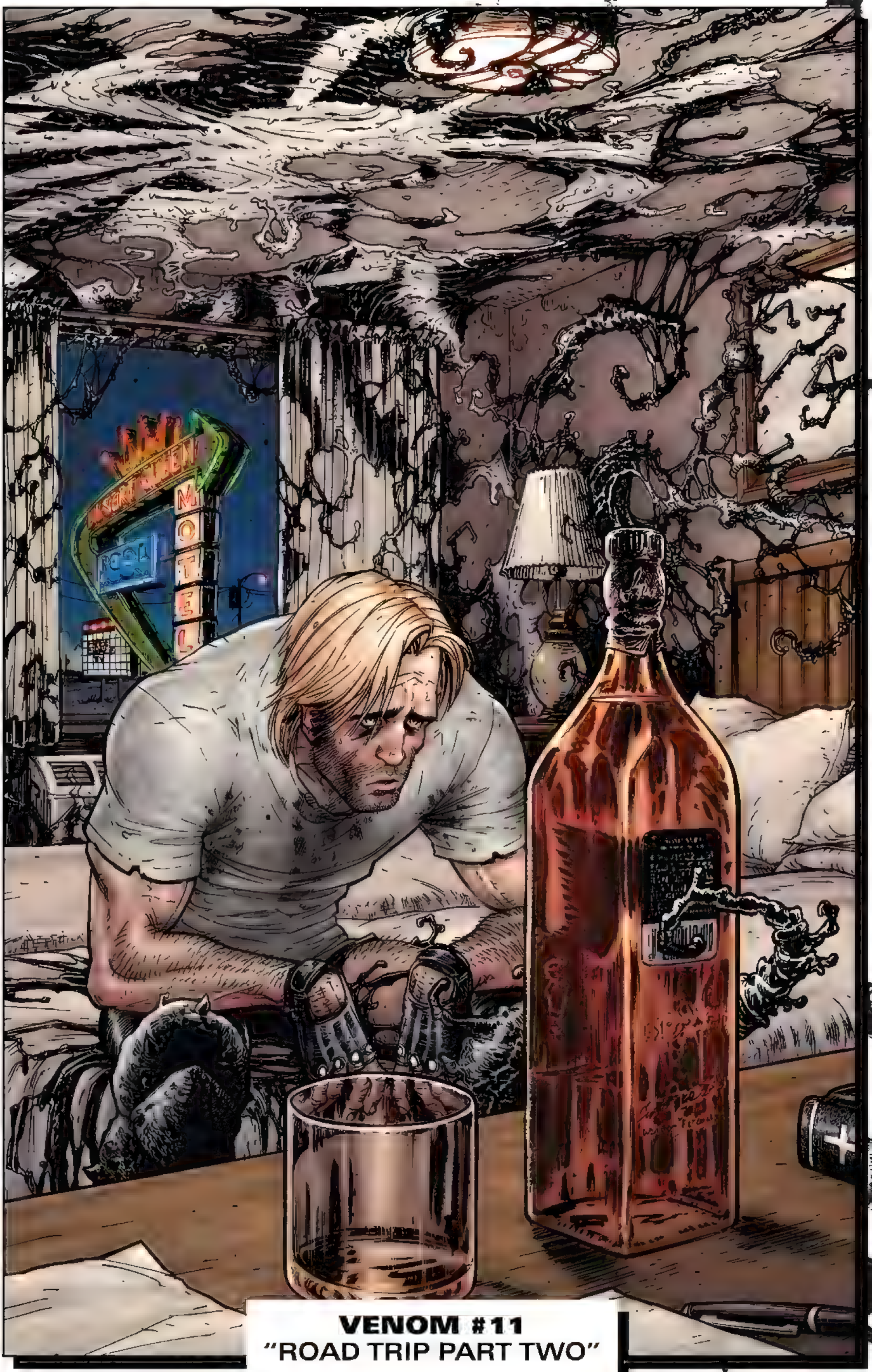
WHILE WE WERE COMBING THE FOREST-- HE FLED.

FLED HOW?

WELL, SIR...

ROAD TRIP

"...I'M AFRAID I HAVE MORE BAD NEWS TO REPORT."



VENOM #11
"ROAD TRIP PART TWO"

New York City

AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION

...AND WE OWE IT ALL TO YOU, MR. EDDIE BROCK. IS THAT RIGHT?

YES, IT WAS MY ANTI-VENOM THAT HEALED OUR SPIDER-INFECTED CITY.

GOD GAVE MAN THE CURE; I WAS MERELY THE VESSEL.

AND MY REWARD?

THIS UTILITY CLOSET.

A MEAL OF STALE RICE.

HOMELESS.

NO JOB.

NO MONEY.

FAILSAFE ARMORY, ALL THAT'S LEFT.

A SIGN.

I HOPE THIS SALVATION WILL BRING HUMILITY TO THE SINNERS OF THIS CITY.

GOD'S CLEMENCY IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLEANSE YOUR SOUL.

GOD WANTS YOU HUMBLE, EDDIE.

ROAD TRIP

THIS IS HIS DOING. REMEMBER.

WANTS YOU HUMBLE.

FOCUSED.

HE WON'T ALWAYS BE SO FORGIVING. HIS VENGEANCE IS GREAT--

OK-KAY-- AND THANK YOU, MR. BROCK.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR...SPIRITED REMINDER THAT WE SHOULD ALL BE GOOD TO ONE ANOTHER AT THIS TIME OF TURMOIL.

...BACK TO YOU, LINDA.

THE BEAST IS OUT THERE.

PREYING ON THE LAMBS.

SCHEMING.

CONSUMING SOULS.

ECSTATIC ABOUT ITS NEW HOST.

UP TO SOMETHING.

CLETUS KASADY-- FILTHY CARNAGE-- BACK AT IT AS WELL. TOXIN...

THE BEAST'S LINEAGE, PROPAGATING, SPREADING UNABATED.

HERE TO TAKE US ALL OVER.

SHNUKK

THEY ARE PUTREFYING CANCERS ON THIS WORLD...

...I AM THE *CURE*.

NO. NO, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG. I'M NOT IN ANY KIND OF TROUBLE.

WENT AWOL-- STOLE VENOM FROM THE U.S. MILITARY.

I KNOW IT WAS JUST ALL OF A SUDDEN. I GOT THE CALL... I HAD TO GO.

CRIME-MASTER WILL KILL HER IF I FAIL.

KILL THEM ALL.

HOW IS MOM DOING?

SHE'S UPSET, FLASH. SHE LOST HER HUSBAND AND HER SON ISN'T HERE TO BE WITH HER.

IF THE V.A. CAN'T LET YOU OUT OF ONE ASSIGNMENT, DAYS AFTER THE DEATH OF YOUR FATHER...

IT'S TIME TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER JOB.

I'VE BEEN THINKING THE SAME THING.

EVER SINCE I KILLED THE HIJACKER.

I HAVE TO GO.

EVER SINCE I STOPPED SLEEPING FROM REMEMBERING WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO BITE OFF A HUMAN HEAD.

I'LL CALL WHEN I CAN.

HAVEN'T TAKEN THE SUIT OFF FOR *DAYS*.

NOT EVEN SURE I CAN TELL THE DIFFERENCE ANYMORE.

NO, I *CAN* TELL THE DIFFERENCE...

I HAVE *LEGS*.

PRETTY BIG DIFFERENCE.

MOM'S *NEVER* GOING TO FORGIVE ME.

SOME HERO.

BETTY'S NOT GOING TO PUT UP WITH THIS MUCH LONGER.

JUST SO LONG AS THEY'RE SAFE...AS LONG AS I KEEP CRIME-MASTER HAPPY.

"CRIME-MASTER," STUPID FREAKIN' NAME.

ASSUMES I'LL KNOW WHAT HE WANTS IN LAS VEGAS WHEN I GET THERE.

IF I FAIL...

STICK TO THE PLAN.

BRING BACK WHATEVER HE WANTS.

GET HIM AND HIS GOONS ALL IN THE SAME ROOM, AT THE SAME TIME...

...KILL EVERY ONE OF THEM.

LOOK WHO'S UP AND WALKING.

GUESS YOU GOT YOUR FRIEND WITH YOU.

JACK-O-LANTERN!

I'M READY FOR YOU.

PHSHH

RELAX, *EUGENE*-- IF I WERE HERE TO KILL YOU WOULD I BE LYING ON YOUR BED WATCHING THE ROAD RUNNER PROGRAM?

I'M JUST HERE TO HELP.

WE'RE GONNA BE ROAD TRIP BUDDIES, YOU AND ME.

LITTLE ADVENTURE ON THE OPEN ROAD.

THIS WASN'T THE DEAL!

THAT'S THE THING ABOUT BLACKMAIL, NANCY-- THE DEAL IS *WHATEVER* WE SAY IT IS.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO COLLECT.

YOU *NEED* ME.

IT'S GONNA BE *GREAT*. I MEAN, YOU'RE MY ARCHNEMESIS AND YOU *DON'T* EVEN *KNOW* ME.

WE SHOULD HAVE A DRINK TOGETHER. GAB ON LIFE.

I DON'T DRINK.

RIGHT. OLD TWELVE-STEP-THOMPSON.

SEE, I KNOW STUFF ABOUT *YOU*.

YOUR DAD WAS A DRINKER TOO, WASN'T HE?

DON'T EVER MENTION MY FAMILY AGAIN.

TEMPER, TEMPER.

YOU'RE LOSING CONTROL. YOU DON'T WANT THAT...*THING* IN THE DRIVER SEAT. BAD FOR BUSINESS.

I'D NEVER POKE FUN ABOUT YOUR DRUNK, DEAD, PIG-COP DAD.

THAT WOULD BE VERY UN-BRO-LIKE OF ME.

GO ON GET SOME REST...

"...ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME AWAITS!"

THE SOLDIER IN QUESTION IS AWOL, WHICH OBVIOUSLY WOULDN'T WARRANT MY APPROACHING THE AVENGERS.

NO. IT WOULD *NOT* WARRANT THAT.

HE'S TAKEN THE *VENOM SYMBIOTE.*

THINKS HE HAS IT UNDER CONTROL.

BUT WE KNOW HOW THAT ENDS.

I UNDERSTAND THE MISSION, CAPTAIN AMERICA.

TAKE DOWN VENOM.

SECURE THE SYMBIOTE...

"...AND BRING IN THE AWOL BRAT FOR COURT-MARTIAL."

YOU KNOW HOW IN MOST MOVIES, THE VILLAIN IS ALWAYS *WA-AY* MORE INTERESTING THAN THE HERO...

...THAT'S GOING TO BE US.

YOU'RE A REAL BORE, JOCKO.

SEVEN HOURS ON OUR SPRING BREAK SUPER-PARTY BRODTRIP TRIP--

YOU HAVEN'T SAID A SINGLE WORD.

IF YOU GOT TO KNOW ME, YOU MIGHT REALLY THINK I'M A PRETTY FUN, PRETTY TERRIFIC GUY.

YOU MIGHT WANT TO KISS ME IN THE HOLE ON MY MOUTH.

C'MON, YOU'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT AT LEAST ONCE.

WHAT IS THAT?

NOTHIN'. MEDICINE.

A CHARISMA BUILDER.

YOU'D BE AMAZED AT HOW *CHARISMA* CAN MAKE YOU FORGIVE SOMEBODY EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE A COMPLETELY UNREDEEMABLE PIECE OF GARBAGE.

CHARISMATIC PEOPLE, THEY'RE NORMALLY SCUMBAGS--IT'S WHY THEY DEVELOP THE SKILL, TO HIDE SCUMBAGGERY.

YOU'RE NOT CHARISMATIC.

YOU'RE JUST SAYING THAT BECAUSE YOU'RE MY ARCHNEMESIS.

I'M SAYING IT BECAUSE IT'S TRUE.

I'D RATHER LISTEN TO A.M. TALK RADIO.

÷SQARKK÷ WHEN A SUPPORT BEAM COLLAPSED.

AT THE TOP OF THE HOUR, AUTHORITIES IN ELKO ARE REPORTING A CAVE-IN AT DOUGLAS MINE.

HALF A DOZEN MEN ARE STILL TRAPPED INSIDE.

NO OFFICIAL WORD ON WHAT CAUSED IT THOUGH THE COMPANY, ROXXON OIL, HAS AN ATROCIOUS SAFETY RECORD.

ROXXON WAS CONTACTED AND REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE CAVE-IN OR DIVULGE WHAT EXACTLY THEY WERE MINING FOR...

SCREEEE

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!

WE PASSED ELKO.

SO?!

THAT MINE CAVE-IN WAS IN ELKO...

ELKO
3 MILES

"...WE'RE GOING TO HELP."

TOM?

TOM, YOU STAY WITH US.

I KNOW THAT'S SOME CRAZY CLICHED BULL TO SAY-- BUT YOU JUST DO IT.

YOU STAY AWAKE.

I-I CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING BELOW MY NECK...

CAN BARELY... BREATHE...

CAN THAT GARBAGE--HEAR THEM CRANES WORKING UP THERE, TOM!

THEY'LL HAVE PARAMEDICS-- THEY *CAN* FIX YOU. NO *QUESTION*...

...THEY CAN DO AMAZING THINGS NOW.

SURE, RON... SURE...

GGRRROOOMMMM

IT'S BUCKLING...

MY GOD.

THAT FIGHT--

LAST THING I'LL EVER SAY TO HER--

--LAST WORDS--

KIDS WENT TO SLEEP CRYIN'--

GGRRROOOMMMM

THAT'S HOW I'M GOING TO LEAVE IT--

THAT'S IT--

THEIR LAST MEMORY OF ME--

KLUT

OKAY, BOYS, LET'S MOVE IT.

I'M NO EXPERT--

GRRRR

BUT THIS ROOF SEEMS FAULTY.

C'MON, STUPIDS! *RUN!*

GET TOPSIDE SO YOU CAN GO TO COLLEGE AND AVOID ENDING UP SQUASHED IN A MINE.

SHUT YOUR MOUTH AND HELP THEM!

I CANT HOLD THIS FOR LONG!

YOU BETTER. ONE OF THESE *GENIUSES* COULD HOLD THE CURE FOR--

SHUT UP!

I WON'T LEAVE HIM!

HE WAS PINNED WHILE SAVING THE REST OF US!

G-GET OUT OF HERE...YOU GOT...KIDS.

NO WAY THROUGH THIS...GET OUT OF HERE...

OKAY LOOK, MY BUDDY *ISN'T* GOING TO LET US LEAVE UNTIL *YOU* COME WITH *US*.

AND YOU'RE TELLING ME YOU WON'T ABANDON YOUR DYING FRIEND...

IT'S A TRICKY SPOT, WHAT'S THE WORD FOR IT...?

STALEMATE.

TOM!

BLAM

Y-YOU SON OF A BITCH...

YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THIS HERO BUSINESS, VENOM...

"...FEELS TERRIFIC!"

HERE THEY COME!

EXCUSE ME, SIR, LINDA SELBY, NEWS STATION 7, YOU TWO ARE HEROES, YOU'VE SAVED DOZENS OF LIVES TODAY. WHO ARE YOU?

WE'RE JUST A COUPLE OF SWEET, ROAD TRIP BROS WHO THOUGHT IT WOULD BE KILLER TIMES TO TRIP BRAINS LISTENING TO PHISH JAM ALBUMS IN A CAVE.

BUT THAT UPTIGHT MINE OUTRIGHT REJECTED THE TERRIBLE SOUNDS AND BEGAN TO IMPLODE IN PROTEST!

WHAT ARE YOU THE COPS? GET THAT CAMERA OUT OF MY FACE! THE COSMOS GUARANTEES MY RIGHTS!

SWAKK

SEE THE MIND OF JOHN WAYNE!

THE MOUNTAINS ARE DIGITAL!

NONE OF YOU DESERVE SERIAL NUMBERS!

YOU SHOT THAT MAN IN COLD BLOOD.

THAT WAS A MERCY KILLING. HE WOULD'VE DIED ANYWAY. I SAVED HIS FRIEND.

I'M A HERO.

SOMETIMES BEING A HERO MEANS MAKING THE TOUGH CHOICES.

LIKE WHEN YOU KILLED THE SCIENTIST IN *NROSVEKISTAN*.

QUIT BEING SO PIOUS.

AND PULL OVER AT THE FIRST FOOD HOLE YOU SEE...

"... ALL THIS HEROING HAS ME *FAMISHED*."

JO LOPE'S Roadside DINER

YOU KNOW WHAT I DON'T GET ABOUT YOU?

YOU GO FIGHT A WAR, GET YOUR LEGS BLOWN OFF FOR *NOTHING*, GET HOME, START PUTTING A LIFE TOGETHER...

AND WHEN UNCLE SAM NEEDS SOMEBODY TO DO SOME MORE CRAZY NONSENSE, YOUR HAND IS THE FIRST TO BE RAISED.

THAT AIN'T HEROIC...

...THAT'S *SADO-MASOCHISTIC.*

WHERE'S THAT WAITRESS...?

HEY-HEY.

CAN I GET YOU BOYS STARTED WITH SOM--

MEN

I-I'M SORRY, MY MIND IS A *MILLION* MILES AWAY.

SO...UM... WHAT'LL YOU BOYS HAVE?

SHOCKED YOU A LITTLE, DIDN'T IT?

GABYIDY-GOOBITY!

A REAL TRASH-MESS I GOT FOR A FACE, *RIGHT?*

NO, ANGEL, HEAVENS NO. I'M SORRY, I DON'T THINK THAT...

WHEN YOU WALKED UP I THOUGHT TO MYSELF, THERE IS A WOMAN WHO LIKES HASHED BROWN 'TATERS.

YOU WEREN'T BORN LIKE THAT. YOU JUST LIKE CAKES AND PIES. WHO DOESN'T?

I WASN'T BORN THIS WAY EITHER.

THIS JERK RIGHT HERE PUT A GRENADE IN MY FACE. TRUE STORY.

I'M SORRY, WANDA, IS THERE A PROBLEM HERE?

WELL, ME AND MY FRIEND HERE WERE GOING TO EAT SOME OF THE *"FOOD"* YOU *"COOK"* IN THIS PIT, BUT LOOKING AT THE STATE OF YOU...MY WAIST IS HOPING I TAKE A PASS.

IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO EAT, THEN I INVITE YOU TO *LEAVE.*

FORGIVE MY... *"FRIEND."*

HE'S GOT *SEVERE* BRAIN DAMAGE; HE'S THE POSTER CHILD FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS SYNDROME. HE LITERALLY IS.

WE'LL TAKE TWO GRANDDADDY BREAKFAST PLATES, A COUPLE COFFEES AND CALL IT A DAY.

SCRAMBLED EGGS.

YOU HAVE TO SPREAD NASTINESS AND TAKE A DUMP ON ANYONE YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH?

ROUGH CHILDHOOD.

BOO-HOO.

SEE, TO YOU, I'M JUST A REALLY NEAT GUY, WITH REALLY COOL WEAPONS, SEXY BUTT, AND A REALLY BOSS MASK.

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHO'S BEHIND ALL THE GLITZ AND GLAMOUR?

THERE BETTER NOT BE BUTTER IN THIS.

YEAH, OKAY. TELL ME YOUR STORY.

ANYTHING THAT'LL KEEP YOUR MOUTH POINTED AWAY FROM THE STAFF.

I WAS NEVER A GREAT KID. I HURT SMALL ANIMALS, LIED, AND DISOBEYED MY PARENTS.

I'M A PSYCHO. IT'S WHAT I AM...

"...AND LIKE ALL BAD KIDS, I *LOVED* HALLOWEEN.

"GOT TO DRESS UP, EAT CANDY, RUN AROUND LIKE A CUCKOO-MONSTER. IT WAS *GREAT*.

"EXCEPT MY PARENTS HAD SO MANY 'RULES'.

"TOLD ME TO NEVER LEAVE THEIR SIDE, SO, NATURALLY, I DID.

"RAN FOR A GOOD FEW BLOCKS...

"HIT AN AREA DIDN'T HAVE A TON OF KIDS EVERYWHERE, SO I COULD SCORE THE MOTHER LODE.

"I GOT A LOAD OF GEEK GAS.

"YOU DON'T WANT ANY OF THAT STUFF.

"DADDY-O'S GUN OF GAS PACKS A NASTY WALLOP.

"BUT HE WAS DOING THE RIGHT THING.

"IT WAS WHERE I BELONGED."

WELCOME HOME, SON.

"I WAS SCARED AT FIRST. BEFORE I REALIZED I WAS FINALLY *HOME*.

"BEFORE I REALIZED HE WAS MY *REAL* FATHER.

"HE'D ALWAYS BEEN MY FATHER, HE WAS JUST WAITING FOR ME TO COME FIND HIM.

"ALL THAT STUFF ABOUT ME THAT EVERYBODY SAID WAS BROKEN, HE SAW AS POSITIVES.

"HE TAUGHT ME THE TRUTH ABOUT HUMAN LIFE, HOW MEANINGLESS IT IS, IT'S A USELESS BURST AND SO YOU BETTER ENJOY IT.

"WE HAD FUN.

"THEN HE STEPPED THINGS UP. TAUGHT ME TO INSERT A BOMB INTO A HOUSE CAT.

"THEY'D BE SO EXCITED TO SEE LIL' BROWN-BUTTON.

"I SAT UP IMAGINING HOW THE SCENARIO PLAYED OUT.

"REUNITED, A HAPPY FAMILY, AROUND THEIR PET, SO GLAD TO HAVE HIM BACK--

"THE BOMB WAS FULL OF NAILS AND BROKEN GLASS.

"ONCE THE CAT WOKE UP, WE SENT IT HOME.

"NEVER KNEW WHAT HAPPENED, BUT I COULD IMAGINE.

"THEY'D BE UPSET ABOUT THE STITCHING ON HIS STOMACH, BUT ASSUME HE'D BEEN HIT BY A CAR AND PUT BACK TOGETHER BY SOME GOOD SAMARITAN.

"HE TRAINED ME, MADE ME THE WORLD'S GREATEST ASSASSIN.

"I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE PROBABLY THROW AROUND THAT TITLE, BUT I REALLY AM THE BEST. I'M A NATURAL.

"AND ALL HE ASKED IN RETURN IS THAT I LOVE HIM LIKE A FATHER AND *ALWAYS* SHOW LOYALTY.

"HE WANTED TO MAKE SURE I DIDN'T HAVE ANY REMAINING ALLIANCE TO MY GENETIC PARENTS.

"YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN THEIR FACES WHEN I WALKED UP.

"IT WAS WHILE I WAS KILLING MY MOTHER THAT I THOUGHT UP MY PARTICULAR SIGNATURE.

"HER BRAINS... THEY WERE MY FIRST.

"S'FUNNY-- IT WAS SO QUIET. SO QUICK..."

ANYWAY, SPENT THE NEXT FEW MONTHS GOING AROUND AND KILLING EVERY OTHER JOKER WHO'D EVER USED A JACK O'LANTERN OUTFIT.

THE PERSONA WAS TOO COOL TO BE SO MISUSED BY THOSE LOSERS. HAD TO CLEAN THE BRAND UP.

GONNA GO USE THE CAN. QUEASY STOMACH.

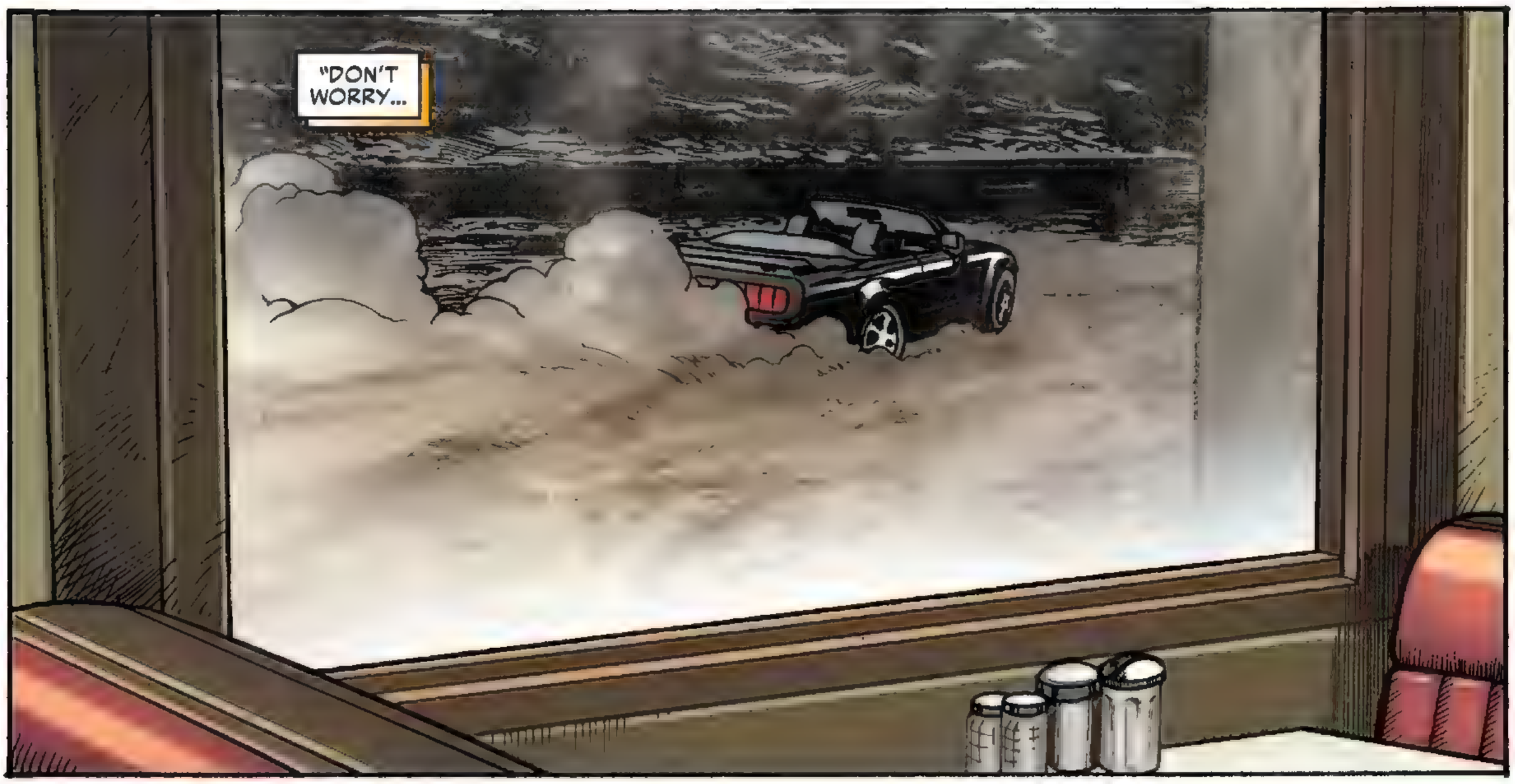
GREASY FOOD JUST GOES RIGHT THROUGH ME.

WHAT IN THE NAME OF GOD HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?

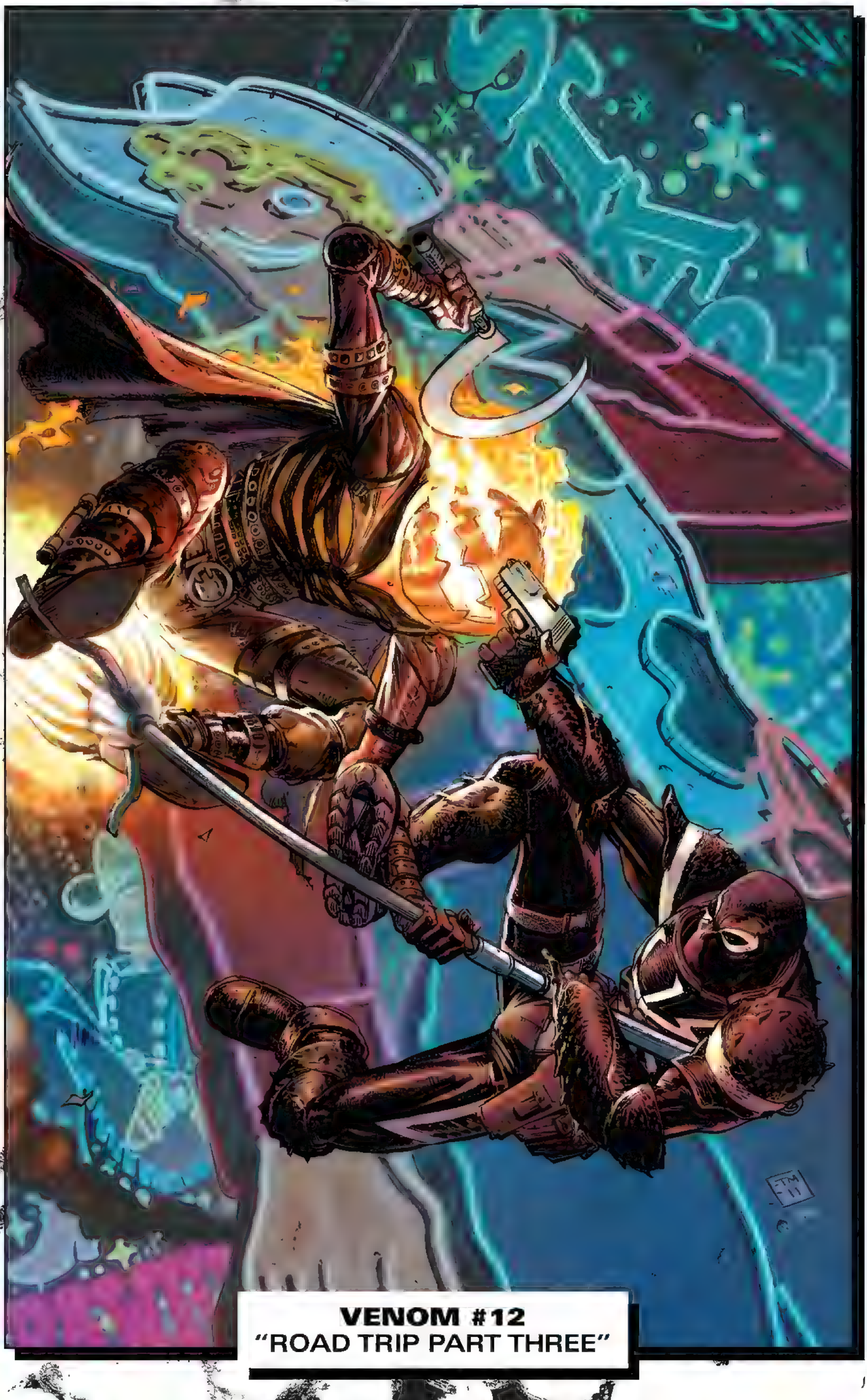
WORKING FOR THE BAD GUYS.

AND THE BAD GUYS ARE INSANE.

THIS IS TOO MUCH.
NEED TO GET HELP.
CAPTAIN AMERICA, SPIDER-MAN...
TURN MYSELF IN.
SHOULD'VE DONE IT IN THE FIRST PLACE...
...BUT THEY WOULD'VE TAKEN THE SUIT...
...CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.
BETTY IS COUNTING ON ME TO--NO. THAT'S ALL CRAP.
NO MORE LIES--
THE TRUTH IS--
I NEED IT.
CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT.
DEAL WITH IT AFTER I DEAL WITH THEM.
JUST HOLD IT TOGETHER--
GET THEM ALL IN THE SAME ROOM AND--
YOU READY?
C'MON, WE'RE ON A CLOCK, TIME TO ROLL. I TOOK CARE OF THE CHECK.
HMM? YEAH... OKAY.
SURE HOPE YOU LEFT THAT POOR WOMAN A GOOD TIP.
WHAT AM I, SOME KIND OF ASS?


"DON'T WORRY...

"...I TOOK GOOD CARE OF 'EM."



VENOM #12
"ROAD TRIP PART THREE"

Las Vegas, Nevada.

DEVIL'S DEN CASINO RESORT TOILET--

THE PARTY HAS ARRIVED!

CRAPS... LOVES ME SOME CRAPS...

WHOOP!

WHAT THE--?!

SCUM--!

RENEGADE ALWAYS *HIC* LEAVES THE LADIES *DOUSED*.

BRING YOU LOSERS SOME LUCK--

HA HA HA!

SNAKE EYES, HOSS!

DEALER WINS!

C'MON, YA DRUNK, LET'S MOVE.

YOU PICKED THE WRONG CASINO TO PULL THIS CRAP IN, DESERT RAT.

LESS YOU WERE LOOKIN' FOR THE PLACE TO GET YOUR WRISTS BROKE.

--YOU MONKEYS *HIC* COOLED MY STREAK--

BUT I'M FEELING HOT AGAIN.

HEY--! WHAT THE--

SYMBIOTE'S UPSET.

SOMETHING ABOUT THIS PLACE SETTING IT OFF.

KWOKK

GAKK--

TAKES EVERY BIT OF CONCENTRATION TO CONTROL IT.

WHATEVER IT IS CRIME-MASTER HAS ME PICKING UP...

THWIP

...VENOM DOESN'T LIKE IT.

I'M IN.

CONGRATS. GET MOVING.

LANTERN'S VOICE LEAVES ME FURIOUS.

THE KIND OF FURIOUS THAT MAKES YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING STUPID.

TAPPED INTO THE SECURITY CAMERA. BEEN WATCHING YOUR PERFORMANCE.

YOU DO A BETTER DRUNK THAN NIC CAGE.

OSCAR WORTHY.

THE LABORATORY IS ON THE 89TH FLOOR...

Planet

...CALL WHEN YOU GET THERE.

TOO MANY MISTAKES.

KILL THEM ALL.

HOWDY.

CRUSH SOMEONE'S SKULL IN.

COMPROMISED... ALLOWED VENOM TO BOND WITH ME.

TAKE IT OUT ON SOMEONE.

DONE BEING SCREWED WITH.

NO OTHER WAY.

DONE BEING PLAYED LIKE A PUNK BY THESE IDIOTS.

PAST FEW WEEKS--AS BAD AS IT GETS.

'SUP, ANDRE?

KIND OF BAD DOESN'T LEAVE MANY REASONS TO KEEP GOING.

UNTIL I FACTOR IN THE DANGER MY ACTIONS HAVE LEFT MY FAMILY IN.

JUST LIKE MY OLD MAN AFTER ALL.

TRAPPED.

TRAPPED WITH NO WAY OUT.

THE RAGE FEEDS MY SYMBIOTE.

GHAA--

THE RAGE MAKES IT STRONG.

IT CHOSE ME--

--KNOWS I NEED IT--

KNOWS MY THOUGHTS.

DISTORTS PERCEPTIONS.

THERE IS NO CONTROLLING IT.

GIVES ME WHAT I NEED TO PLOW THESE BASTARDS OVER.

PAY THEM BACK FOR THE WAY THEY'VE TREATED ME.

GRRGHAGHAHA!

THEY HAVE NO IDEA THE BEAST THEY'VE AWOKEN...

...THEY WILL.

INFORM MR. DEGLI. WHOEVER GOT IN THAT ELEVATOR DISABLED THE CAMERA--WE'VE GOT TROUBLE COMING.

I'VE GOT A PRETTY GOOD IDEA...

WHERE IS HE GOING?

"...AND WE BETTER HOPE HE DOESN'T GET IN."

DING!

WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'VE GOT IN THERE, BUT WHATEVER IT IS--

GRAWWK!

PNG

WNG

SKN

PNG

PNG

T-SHOOT TO KILL!

BLAP BLAP BLAP

BLAP BLAP BLAP

LORD!

YERAGHH!

MOTHER OF--

--PLEASE!

DARKNESS--

COMFORT.

SOMETHING IN MY SYSTEM...

YEAG--

SKRUK

...A REWARD...

AN OPIATE...

...THE SYMBIOTE PUTTING ME TO SLEEP.

BROOM

SON OF A--

SSSSMMELLSSS... WWE DON'T LIKE IIT.

THOMPSON, YOU THERE?!

USSSURPER-- HEERE WWE WWILLL KKILL IIT.

COMPETITION FFOR WHHAT ISS COOMINNG.

ONLLY ONNE CCAN DOMINNATE THISS WORRLD--

--NNOTT BBE THISS WHHELP.

TOXIN MUSST DDIE!

SKREEE!

EUGENE? WHAT'S GOING ON?

SMASH

HEY-- ANSWER ME!

SKREEE!

GGRAWRR!

THOMPSON!

WWE KKILLL ITT NOWW!

BOOOM

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!

KRASH

GAZZAAT

YOU RECOGNIZE WE'RE IN BREACH OF CONTRACT?

DO YOU WANT YOUR FAMILY DONE EXECUTION STYLE?

WWE MMUSST KKKIILLL IIT!

OH, C'MON, MAN--

SWEET!

THIS WASN'T PART OF THE PLAN!

GHRAAWWWAKK!

WE'RE DONE BEIN' FRIENDLY, YOU AN' ME.

WE'RE BACK TO THAT "LET'S KILL EACH OTHER" PHASE.

DADDY-O, YOU WATCHING THIS JIVE ASS IDIOT BUSINESS?

THOMPSON'S LOST CONTROL OF VENOM--

--IT'S GOING THROUGH SOME KIND OF *TERRITORIAL DISPUTE*--TRYING TO KILL THE TOXIN SYMBIOTE.

DO YOU HAVE THE TOXIN SYMBIOTE ON YOUR PERSON, JACK?

YES, SIR, I DO.

WHAT DO YOU ADVISE?

SON...

...I ADVISE YOU TO RUN.

GHAHH-!!

SHRNK

THWIPP

ROGER THAT.

GOING TO FIND YOUR PRECIOUS BETTY.

GOING TO CUT OUT HER BRAINS FOR THIS.

YOU IN THERE, EUGENE?

YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING?

REIGN

GET THAT UGLY THING THE-HELL-UNDER CONTROL AND I'LL LEAVE HER ALONE. I'LL--

--OH, MOTHER--

WHOOO

AKK--

BOOOM

THOMPSON, IF YOU'RE IN THERE, YOU *LISTEN TO ME.*

YOU LISTEN *CAREFUL.*

YOU GET THIS SON OF A BITCH UNDER CONTROL OR MY DAD IS GONNA KILL YOUR MOM.

BOOOM

THINK!

HE'S A SUPER BAD GUY.

HE'LL REALLY DO IT!

GOOD.

GOOD BOY.

I KNOW YOU WEREN'T IN CONTROL OF ANY OF THIS, EUGENE.

AND YOU GOT IT UNDER WRAPS AT THE END THERE.

MAKE YOU A DEAL; YOU LEAVE MY FAMILY ALONE...

I'LL LEAVE *YOUR* FAMILY ALONE.

PARK

AND HEY, DO YOURSELF A FAVOR--*HAVE A DRINK!*

YOU'RE ALL WOUND UP.

"YES. I KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS..."

AP

AP

...JUST PUT HER ON THE PHONE, MOM.

BETTY?

BETTY, LISTEN TO ME.

STOP TALKING--I NEED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.

DO IT.

I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS.

I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH YOUR NEEDS AND THIS JOB.

NO-- YOU'VE BEEN GREAT--

--IT DOESN'T MATTER.

ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU GET IT THROUGH YOUR HEAD...

...WE'RE THROUGH.

...WHEN TWO MEN CAUSED MILLIONS IN DAMAGE ON THE STRIP.

AUTHORITIES IDENTIFY THE TWO SUPER VILLAINS AS VENOM AND JACK O'LANTERN.

IF YOU SEE EITHER MAN, CONTACT THE AUTHORITIES IMMEDIATELY.

DANG, SON.

INVESTIGATORS ARE LOOKING INTO POSSIBLE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE SUPER VILLAINS AND THE VIOLENT MURDER OF A WAITRESS AND MANAGER OF A DINER YESTERDAY.

AN UNIDENTIFIED SOURCE IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT CORROBORATES RUMORS THAT THE VICTIMS HAD THEIR BRAINS TAKEN OUT OF THEIR HEADS AND REPLACED WITH CANDLES...

...POINTING TO A CONNECTION WITH THE JACK O'LANTERN SERIAL KILLER.

HARD TIMES.

WE'RE GETTING USED TO IT.

...YOU GET A BREAK! I'LL GIVE YOU A SHINER, MARRY!

HAHA HAHAHA HAHA

YOU'D HAVE TO DROP THIRTY POUNDS JUST TO GET OFF THE COUCH, PAUL.

HAHA HAHAHA HAHA

WHUMP

'SCUSE ME.

YOU AIN'T GOT A CAR, WE AIN'T GOT NO BUSINESS.

WHICH WAY IS LAS VEGAS AND HOW FAR?

JUST KEEP HEADIN' WEST.

FOLLOW THE ROUTE 66.

BUT IF YER WALKIN', IT'LL TAKE YOU A BIT.

I'M NOT WALKING.

VENOM #13
"CIRCLE OF FOUR PART ONE"

VENOM

CIRCLE OF FOUR

FOUR WAYS TO DIE.
ONLY ONE CHANCE TO SURVIVE.

Eugene "Flash" Thompson was a soldier, until he lost his legs in combat. Now he's the host of the Venom symbiote, a parasitic alien that grants powers similar to Spider-Man. As Venom, Flash became a black-ops special operative for the Army. But the struggle against the symbiote and his alcoholism took a heavy toll on him. Flash deserted the Army and is on the run...

General Thunderbolt Ross, after years of attempting to destroy the Hulk, was himself transformed into a behemoth of rage: The Red Hulk! A military man for life, Ross has been tasked to bring in the renegade Flash Thompson and secure the Venom symbiote.

Laura Kinney, the teenage clone of Wolverine, has been trying to track down a sample of her blood, stolen from her some time ago. Fearing that her genetic material could be used to create other living weapons like herself, she's tracked the buyer to Las Vegas.

Alejandra is cursed to roam the earth as the Ghost Rider, a brutal Spirit existing only to mete out vengeance on the wicked. She's currently traveling with Johnny Blaze, the previous Ghost Rider. Though she is brash and quick to anger, Johnny hopes he can teach Alejandra how to control her powers before she becomes a danger to herself...and the whole world.

Las Vegas.

I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A FIGHT, BETTY.

I TOLD YOU--STOP CALLING.

ONLY GAVE MOM MY ROOM NUMBER IN CASE OF EMERGENCY.

I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER. I'LL BE BACK SOON AND I'LL MAKE SURE--

WHEN I'M READY. NO-- LISTEN-- STOP--

IT'S NOT YOUR BUSINESS ANYMORE, BETTY!

HOW CAN I GET THAT INTO YOUR HEAD?!

WE'RE THROUGH!

--LEAVE ME THE HELL ALONE!

TASHH

GOOD.

THAT SHOULD DO IT.

KEEP HER AWAY FROM US...FROM ME.

KEEP THEM ALL AWAY FROM ME...

...ONLY WAY I CAN PROTECT THEM.

THE DEVIL'S DEN

HEY!

I'M GOOD FOR THE MONEY--I'M GOOD FOR IT ALL!

NO NEED FOR THE FREAK SHOW--I'LL GET YOU PAID!

MR. RAGS.

YOU OWE MY CASINO THIRTY-TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS.

I'VE CHECKED YOUR BANK ACCOUNTS.

YOU DON'T HAVE THE MONEY.

SO NOW THINGS GET *WEIRD.*

NO--WHAT ARE Y--!

MR. DEGLI-- LISTEN--JUST *LISTEN!* JUST EVERYBODY *CALM DOWN,* MAN!

DON'T NEED TO PULL THIS STRONG-ARM ROUTINE WITH ME--! I'M OLD-SCHOOL-- I-I'VE BEEN AROUND!

YOU HAVE *"BEEN AROUND,"* MR. GARY RAGS.

GAMBLED THE MONEY INTENDED FOR YOUR MOTHER'S CANCER TREATMENT.

LEFT YOUR WIFE AND SONS DESOLATE WITH NOTHING.

KILLED A BOOKIE IN RENO, TO AVOID A TWO THOUSAND DOLLAR DEBT.

TO BE HONEST, YOUR SOUL'S NOT WORTH *MUCH.*

BUT, I'M A FAIR MAN; I'LL ABSOLVE ALL DEBTS TO MY CASINO ONCE YOU SIGN THIS CONTRACT GIVING ME YOUR TARNISHED SOUL.

DONE.

OKAY? YOU GOT IT, MAN.

HEY?!

WHAT THE HELL, MAN?

WE HAD A DEAL!

KILNN

IT'S ALL IN THE SMALL PRINT, MR. RAGS.

NOW, I'M JUST GOING TO TAKE WHAT IS RIGHTFULLY MINE.

HOLD VERY STILL.

OR SQUIRM...

"...IT'S GOING TO HURT LIKE HELL EITHER WAY."

...AND ONCE YOU'RE TURNED--

--TAKE A BREATH--

--AIM--

PLUS, IF YOU STICK THE LANDING IT LOOKS AWFUL IMPRESSIVE.

NO BETTER WAY TO HIT SOME GOON GIVING CHASE, ALEJANDRA. THE FLIP CAN BE TRICKY, BUT WITH A LITTLE PRACTICE--

I'M SORRY...

...BUT ARE *YOU* TRYING TO TEACH *ME* SOMETHING, BLAZE?

A LOT OF THINGS I CAN FORGIVE A MAN FOR

GOING A.W.O.L. AIN'T ONE.

BOOM

AFTER PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO WAR EVEN A MAN OF HONOR CONSIDERS BREAKING HIS OATH IN WEAKER HOURS--

BUT ONLY A COWARD WALKS THAT ROAD

SOLDIER I'M AFTER STOLE THE VENOM SYMBIOTE FROM UNCLE SAM

MADE HIS BED

100OM!

ONLY ADVICE I COULD GIVE THE PINKO, COWARD POOR DECISION MAKER--

"...BETTER BE IN SHAPE FOR A FIGHT."

EVER SINCE I WAS CREATED AS X-23, THERE HAS *ALWAYS* BEEN SOMEONE TRYING TO EXPLOIT ME.

TRYING TO STEAL FROM ME.

STEAL MY DIGNITY.

MY OPTIMISM.

MY FAITH IN HUMANITY.

AMERICAN EAGLE

CALEB HAMMER TIME

HRRM.

MR. DEGLI, THE MAN WHO OWNS THIS CASINO, HAS TRIED TO STEAL SOMETHING *FAR* MORE DIFFICULT TO RECOVER...

...HE HAS TRIED TO STEAL MY SOUL.

HOW MUCH TO GET YOU TO COME UP TO MY SUITE FOR A "*NAP*," HONEY-PIE?

DO YOU FEEL THAT *VERY* SHARP THING IN YOUR BACK?

IF YOU TOUCH ANOTHER WOMAN LIKE THAT *EVER* AGAIN--

SNIKT!

--YOU WILL TAKE A NAP INTO ETERNITY.

MR. DEGLI PURCHASED A VIAL OF MY BLOOD.

MORE TAMPERING. MORE EXPLOITATION.

I AM GOING TO GET IT BACK...

...AND THEN I WILL KILL MR. DEGLI.

COMING SOON! CHAUNCEY'S MAGIC CASTLE!

YOU HAVE ALL YOU NEED TA GET THE JOB DONE, BABY?

MS. OYLE, MY BITTER-SWEET, THE PLANETS ARE ALIGNED, THE ITEMS IN MY POSSESSION.

LAS VEGAS REEKS WITH WICKEDNESS, IT IS BUILT ON SIN.

CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THIS WORKS?

I CAN.

WE'LL BE THE *HOTTEST* COUPLE.

WE WILL.

YOU'RE GETTING ME ALL AFLUTTER, BABY.

GET THIS PARTY STARTED.

ONE HUNDRED HUMAN SOULS SIGNED OVER OF THEIR OWN VOLITION.

THANKFULLY MR. RAGS COULDN'T RESIST CHASING THAT STRAIGHT.

NOW, THE ALIEN'S FLESH.

THAT TOXIN SYMBIOTE WAS A REAL GET, BABY.

YES. WELL WORTH THE KILLING IT TOOK TO ACQUIRE.

AND THE FINAL INGREDIENT--THE BLOOD OF A MORTAL WHO HAS BEEN TO HELL AND BACK.

A COSTLY SPECIMEN.

NOW, WE AWAIT THE FINAL INGREDIENT.

YA THINK SHE'LL COME?

OH, I'M SURE OF IT...

"...THE DEVIL COULDN'T KEEP HER AWAY."

WHY DO YOU ASSUME YOU KNOW SO MUCH MORE THAN I DO?

PIES!

ALEJANDRA, I WAS SIMPLY TRYING TO TELL YOU--

DON'T TELL ME ANYTHING.

MIDDLE-AGED *BURN-OUT* LOOKING FOR A DOE-EYED GIRL TO STUDIOUSLY ABSORB ALL THE OH-SO-VERY IMPORTANT LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS.

I WAS JUST TRYIN' TO--

TRYING TO VALIDATE YOUR LIFE, OLD MAN...

I CAN...

...SEE...

GAAK-- AKK--

MY CHILI WAS THE *EXTRA* SPICY.

THEY SWAPPED OUR ORDERS.

I WAS TRYING TO TELL YOU.

THIS HERE, IT'S IRONIC. YOU GET THAT, DONTCHA?

LISTEN, KID, I GET IT, I'M OLD.

MORE MOTORHEAD THAN MASTODON.

BUT YOU MIGHT CONSIDER--

SILENCE! DO YOU HEAR THEM?!

HUNDREDS OF CURSED SINFUL, SOULS...

ZARATHOS MUST PERFORM HIS WORK--THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE IS THIRSTY FOR THE RETRIBUTION OF SINNERS.

HUNDREDS OF SOULS CRYING?

THAT'S *BIG*. TOO BIG. HIGH-LEVEL SATANIC BIG.

YOU'RE NOT READY TO INVESTIGATE SOMETHING LIKE THIS, DARLIN'.

I AM *GHOST RIDER*, BLAZE.

BUT YOU'RE NEW. LAST THING YOU NEED IS TO BE LURED IN BY DEVIL VOODOO.

BEEN THERE. TRUST ME.

LET ME CALL A FRIEND TO INVESTIGATE.

PRAY YOU'RE RIGHT.

HELLO? DAIMON? NO...WHERE IS HE?

I'M AN OLD FRIEND WHO DOESN'T LIKE TO GIVE MY NAME OUT TO MAGIC USER TYPES.

YEAH-- ALL RIGHT BUT IF YOU SEE HIM CAN YOU GIVE HIM A MESSAGE...

"...THERE'S DEVIL TROUBLE BREWIN' OUT WEST."

OLD MAN SAID, MAYBE, FIVE KIND WORDS MY ENTIRE LIFE.

WHY DO I GIVE HIM SO MUCH POWER OVER ME WHEN HE SPENT HIS LIFE UTTERLY DISINTERESTED?

THEY DIAGNOSED HIM BIPOLAR BUT MOM WOULDN'T ADMIT IT.

TOOK HIM TO ANOTHER DOCTOR WHO TOLD HER WHAT SHE WANTED TO HEAR.

NEVER ADMIT TO ANYONE HE HAD A PROBLEM. THAT WOULD BE A STRANGE KIND OF FAILURE.

WELL, YOUR HUSBAND BEAT YOUR SON AND YOU STAYED WITH HIM.

SO YOU FAILED, MOM.

LOOK AT THE PRODUCT OF YOUR PRIDE NOW.

I'M DOING *GREAT.*

GRAAOOOM

HOUSEKEEPING.

JEEZ--!

HAND OVER THE SYMBIOTE, THOMPSON.

I GOT A FANCY CONTAINER FOR IT, WE CAN MAKE THIS NICE AND EASY, GET YOU HOME IN TIME FOR COURT-MARTIAL IN ONE PIECE.

W-WHAT THE HELL--?!

THERE YOU ARE.

CAN'T HAVE YOU BONDING TO--

HEY!

GAA-- GET OF

WWE-- ARRE DONN'T WWANT THIS--!

AHH, SON OF A--

STAR MART

PIZZA SNAX

TATTOOS

ZAP

TACO PAGODA

DOOOOOOOM

NO WAY AM I PREPARED FOR A HULK, RED, PURPLE, OR PAISLEY.

DRUNK--

SYMBIOTE CAN'T SOBER ME UP UNLESS I GIVE IT CONTROL--NO.

LAST THING I DO.

RACHA PATEL

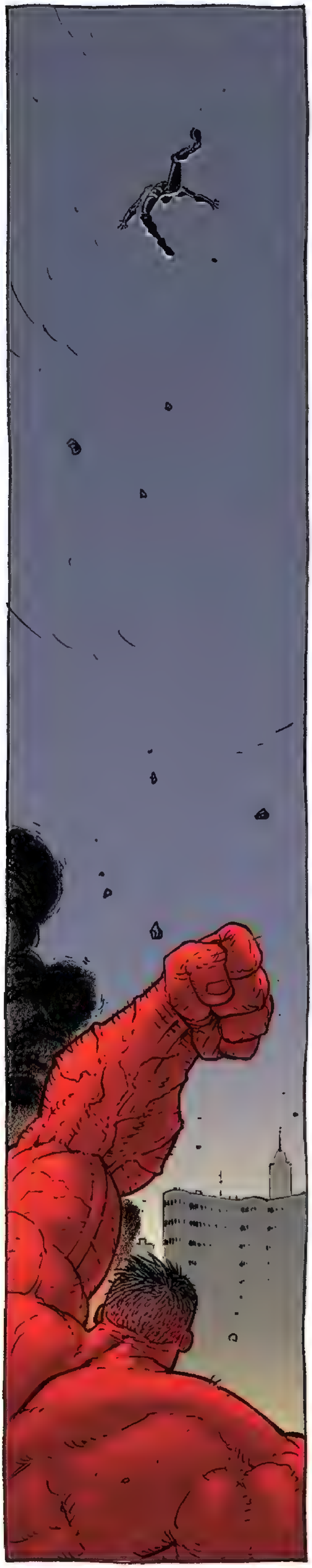
PRETTY GIRLS WITH BEERS

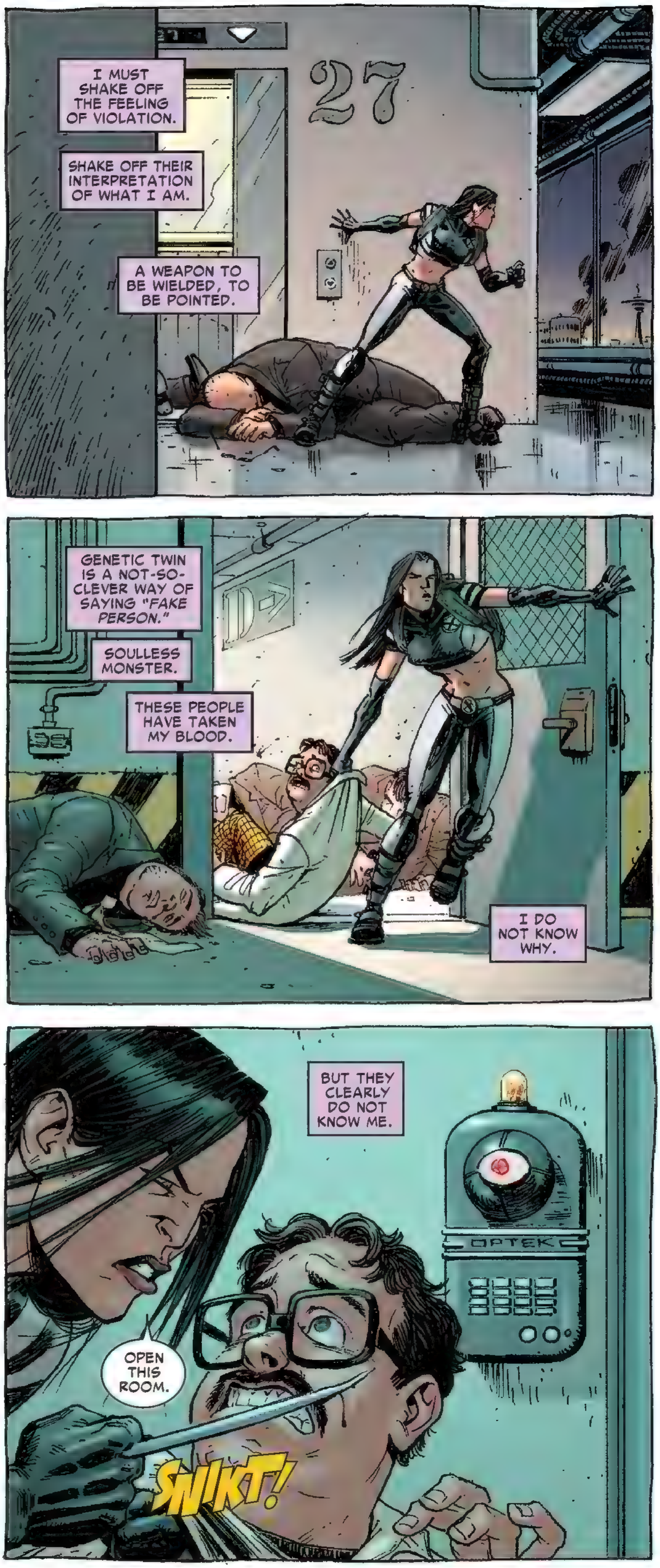
LAWN

LAST THING RIGHT BEFORE--

GRADOOOM

HULK SMASH.




I MUST SHAKE OFF THE FEELING OF VIOLATION.
SHAKE OFF THEIR INTERPRETATION OF WHAT I AM.
A WEAPON TO BE WIELDED, TO BE POINTED.
27
GENETIC TWIN IS A NOT-SO-CLEVER WAY OF SAYING "FAKE PERSON."
SOULLESS MONSTER.
THESE PEOPLE HAVE TAKEN MY BLOOD.
I DO NOT KNOW WHY.
BUT THEY CLEARLY DO NOT KNOW ME.
OPTEK
OPEN THIS ROOM.
SNIKT!

OP SECURITY
ACCESS ONLY

MY WORST FEARS.

YOU KNOW WHOSE CASINO THIS IS, GIRL?

CLONES.

REPLICATING ME.

SOULLESS WEAPON.

IT ISN'T UNTIL I PLANT THE C4 THAT IT OCCURS TO ME THAT THESE GIRLS HAVE AS MUCH RIGHT TO LIFE AS I DO.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME IN THEIR SITUATION.

YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO YOU'RE--

KRAKOOM

BUT MORE THAN CLONES OF ME, THEY HAVE SYMBIOTES. THEY ARE WEAPONS.

I DO NOT KNOW IF THEY ARE SOULLESS...

...BUT THE ANSWER CAN NOT STOP ME FROM KILLING THEM.

THE SOULS CHOKE--SCREAMING LOUDER THE CLOSER I GET.

ANGUISH BORN OF MISDEED AND UNNATURAL BARGAIN.

THEY WARN THAT IF I DO NOT STOP THE MAN RESPONSIBLE...

...ALL WILL SUFFER THEIR FATE.

OH, NO! HOW *DID* SHE FIND US?!

YEAH, LOOK OUT, IT'S THE GHOST RIDER. WHAT WILL WE DO?

THEY SEEK TO OPEN A BLACK DOORWAY.

SEEK TO BRING SOMETHING EVIL TO EARTH--

I WILL COUNTER THE DEVICE'S DIRECTION.

CLOSE OFF WHATEVER IT IS ATTEMPTING TO OPEN.

ROUND AND ROUND AND ROUND SHE GOES...

"...AND WHAT SHE BRINGS, NOBODY KNOWS?!"

THEY RISE FROM THE GUTTERS OF HELL.

WHAT HAVE I DONE? ACTIVATED IT-- OPENED THE DOORWAY

SO ARROGANT.

I NEVER COULD HAVE DONE THIS WITH ANY OTHER SOUL IN COMMAND OF THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE.

YOU HAVE POWERED THE CENTRIFUGE, OPENED THE DOOR--

YOU'VE BROUGHT HELL TO EARTH!

BUT DON'T THINK ABOUT STOPPING!

IF YOU STOP SPINNING THE DOORWAY WILL REVERSE THE PULL AND THAT, DEAR GIRL, WOULD DRAG *EARTH DOWN INTO HELL!*

"YOU'VE GOT WHAT DANTE ALIGHIERI WOULD CALL ONE HELL OF AN IRONIC TORMENT AWAITING YOU."

YOU'RE A DAMN DISGRACE!

YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT, BUDDY.

TWOK

BUT I GOT MY REASONS.

BOOOOM

HEY--

THIS GROUND FIRE...

THIS ONE OF YOUR POWERS?

NO...I THOUGHT IT WAS YOURS.

SORRY, COWARD...

...I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL THIS IS.

HOLY GOD.

T-THOSE ARE DEMONS...

"...HELL IS EXACTLY WHAT THIS IS."

GO! RUN! I'LL TAKE C--

SNLRP

YOU SUFFER BILE! YOU DIGEST SLOW!

NO-- NO!

AAEEEE!

SKRP

RATHUUUMM

DAMN RIGHT.

FRONT AN' CENTER, BOY.

HELL'S ON THE LOOSE AND MY MONEY SAYS THAT BLACK TOWER HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT.

WHY AM I TAKING ORDERS FROM YOU?

I'M A GENERAL. YOU'RE A CORPORAL.

FINE. WE'LL JUST FINISH BEATING ON EACH OTHER LATER?

"IT'S A PLAN."

DAMN STUPID KID.

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

WELCOME To Fabulous LAS VEGAS NEVADA

SO MUCH TO PROVE--GONNA KILL US ALL TO PROVE IT.

I AIN'T NEW TO THE HELL BUSINESS--KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS.

SOMEONE'S MAKING A PLAY AT THE CONVERGENCE.

OPENING A DOORWAY TO THE BIG PIT.

NEVADA

SOMEONE'S BRINGING HELL TO EARTH.

THIS RELIC CREATES A BARRIER THROUGH WHICH HELLFIRE CANNOT PASS.

HELL WILL NOT SPREAD.

DRIVE CAREFULLY Come Back SOON

BUT SOMEBODY'S GOTTA GO TO HELL AND TAMP THE BASTARDS BACK DOWN.

DRIVE CAREFULLY Come Back SOON

AIN'T I THE LUCKY ONE.

HELL'S EXPANSION HAS BEEN HALTED.

FIRE SHOULD HAVE SPREAD ACROSS THE GLOBE BY NOW.

CLUB COLT

WHAT'S THE HUBBUB?

THINK MAYBE YA GOT A SORCERER SUPREME ONTO YA, BABY?

NO. STRANGE LACKS THE POWER. DAIMON HELLSTROM PERHAPS.

WHATEVER. LOOK HOW CLOSE YOU GOT IT!

MAMA'S FEELIN' RANDY, BABY.

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE WE'VE SEEN HOME--SINCE YOUR FATHER CAST US OUT.

AND NOW, ALL OF A SUDDEN...

...HELL BOWS TO BLACKHEART.

JUST IN TIME.

IF I HAD TO DISGUISE MYSELF AS ONE OF THE MEAT SACKS FOR ANOTHER MINUTE I WOULD HAVE CLAWED MY EYES OUT.

DON'T GET ME WRONG, IT HASN'T BEEN ALL BAD...

...WE'VE FOUND USES FOR FLESH.

NOW, TIME TO GLOAT.

AFTER BEING CAST OUT AND LEFT POWERLESS ALL THESE YEARS, I'M DYING TO FIND OUT...

...HOW IS YOUR CORNER OF HELL TONIGHT, FATHER?

SECURE, THOUGH I CAN SEE IT WAS NOT PART OF YOUR SCHEME TO LEAVE IT AS SUCH, WHELP

YOU THOUGHT YOU'D UPROOT ALL OF HELL, PILFERING IT AWAY TO EARTH.

INSTEAD YOU'VE MANAGED TO DRAW IN A SMALL, MEANINGLESS CORNER.

BUT, I CAN'T IMAGINE YOU'VE CALLED ME TO BRAG ABOUT YOUR FAILURE...

FAILED, MEPHISTO? FAILED?

I HAVE DRAWN HELL TO EARTH!

YES. A SMALL BIT OF HELL NOW TOUCHES A SMALL BIT OF EARTH.

SOMETHING YOU HAVE ATTEMPTED MANY TIMES AND FAILED!

AND HAD YOU MANAGED TO PULL HELL UP I WOULD BE THERE TO GIVE YOU THE HUG AND KISS ON YOUR FOREHEAD YOU SO CLEARLY DESIRE.

"WHAT A GOOD BOY," I'D SAY.

"CASTING YOU OUT OF HELL TURNED YOU INTO A TRUE DEVIL."

SOON ALL THE SOULS OF EARTH AND HELL WILL BE MINE, OLD MAN.

SOON I WILL HAVE MORE POWER THAN YOU COULD DREAM--

I WILL TORMENT YOU FOR ETERNITY!

KRAKASHH

FATHER WILL BE ANGRY. HE WILL TRY TO HARM US.

BRING ME THE SYMBIOTE WARRIORS, MY GUARDIANS, THEY ARE TO NEVER LEAVE MY SIDE.

HMM, A BIT OF A PROBLEM...

"...SOMEONE'S GONE AN' ALREADY RELEASED THEM."

EVERYTHING IS VERY BAD AND VERY ODD.

GHAWAKK!

THE SKY IS ON FIRE.

SCENT ON THE AIR--TRUE BRIMSTONE.

I'VE SMELLED IT ONLY ONCE BEFORE...

...IN HELL.

THIS IS THE *VERY WORST THING* I'VE EVER SEEN IN MY LIFE.

IDIOT! DO YOU HAVE *ANY IDEA* WHAT YOU'VE DONE?!

IF I STOP, THE CENTRIFUGE WILL TURN THE OTHER DIRECTION-- IT WILL SUCK EARTH INTO HELL!

THEN YOU HAVE TO GO STOP WHOEVER CAST THE SPELL.

I'LL KEEP THIS THING SPINNING.

THE SUFFERING SPIRITS WILL TEAR YOU APART!

I'M MADE OF STERN STUFF--I CAN SURVIVE 'EM-- FOR A WHILE.

IT'S THE ONLY CHOICE WE'VE GOT THANKS TO YOUR RECKLESSNESS-- NOW GO--

"--CLEAN UP YOUR MESS!"

WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO ABOUT THEM AVENGERS, BABY?

NERDS DO SO LOVE TO PUNCH POOR MISUNDERSTOODS SUCH AS US.

THE HEROES WILL COME-- WILL FIND ME PREPARED.

THE MIRROR KNOWS THE WAY.

KRRAUSHH

THE MIRROR WILL BE KEY--

YOU. ARE YOU THE PIG WHO STOLE MY BLOOD?

YOU THE FREAK RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THIS?

TOOOOOOOOOOM

I AM AND I AM.

GUILTY OF *ALL* CHARGES.

THEN I GUESS WE HAVE TO BUST YOU UP TO UNDO IT.

EASY ON THE THREATS.

READ THIS THING'S AVENGERS FILE.

REAL, REAL BAD.

KRRASHH

DIDN'T I TELL YOU WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU STOPPED POWERING THE CENTRIFUGE, DEAR GIRL?

REVERSE THIS NOW OR SUFFER VENGEANCE.

YOU ARE IN HELL, SPIRIT. I AM A PRINCE OF HELL.

IT NOURISHES ME. EMPOWERS ME.

YOU ARE FOREIGN HERE. WEAK.

H'ELIAN'S MIRROR CAULDRON, STEAL NOW THE IMPRESSION OF THEIR SOUL'S TRUE FORM!

TWIST IT.

INVERT IT.

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU PEOPLE ARE, BUT WHATEVER COMES OUT OF THAT MIRROR, WE TAKE IT DOWN TOGETHER.

DON'T TRY AND GIVE ME ORDERS, KID. I'LL KEEP THE LOT OF YOU SAFE AS I CAN.

JUST STAY OUT OF MY WAY. WE HAVE PERSONAL BUSINESS.

VENGEANCE WILL BE MINE!

REFLECTOR OF INNER LIES!

ALL WHO GAZE ON THE MADNESS MIRROR DIE AT THE HANDS OF THEIR ANTITHESES!

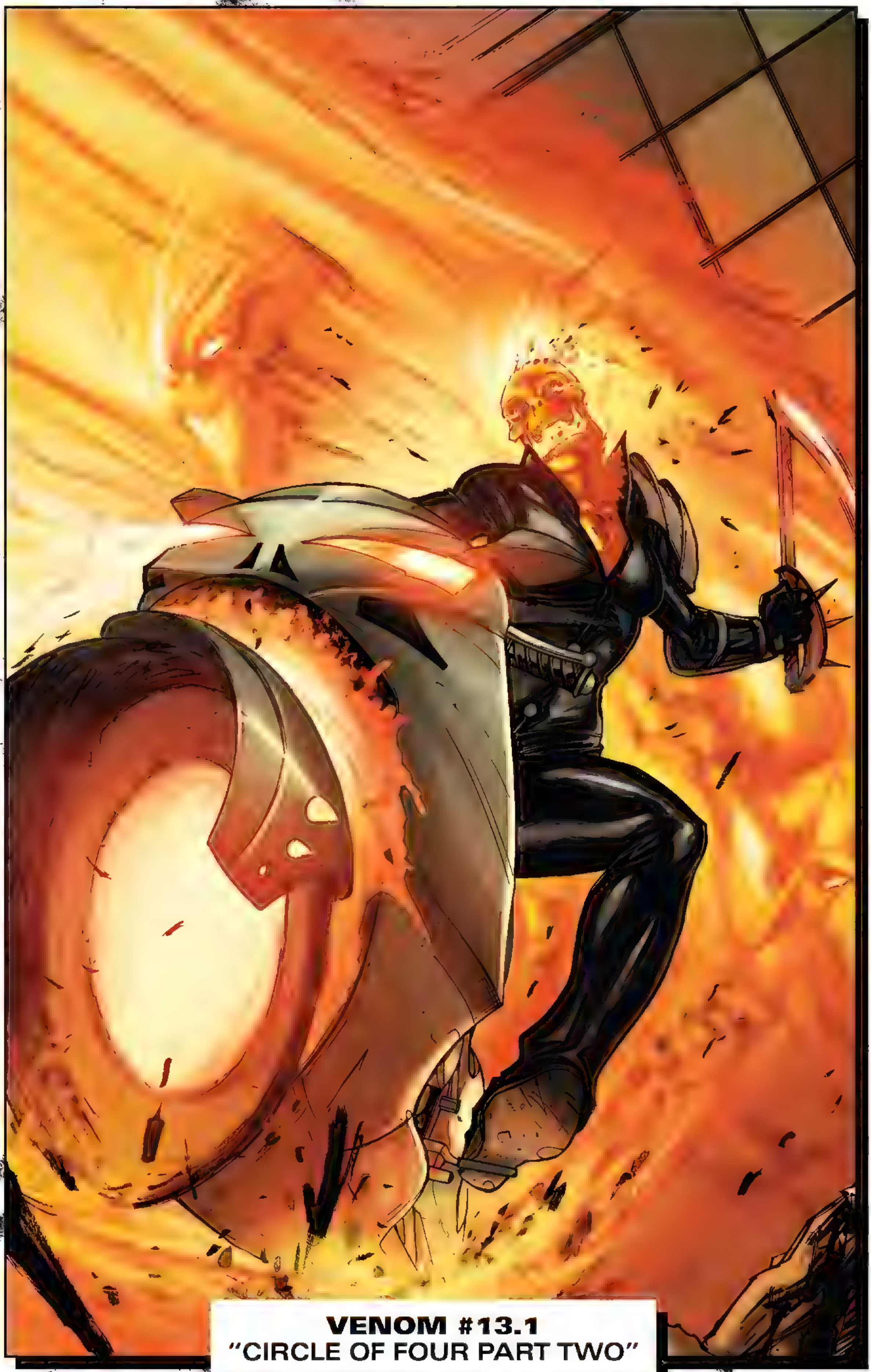
Ichor

X-666

The Evangelist

Encephalon

CIRCLE OF FOUR



VENOM #13.1
"CIRCLE OF FOUR PART TWO"

Las Vegas Border.

BEEN PUSHING AGAINST THIN AIR FOR TEN MINUTES. *HNNNNNN...*

WELCOME To Fabulous LAS VEGAS

YOU EVER TIRE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, YOU COULD MAKE A GO OF IT AS A DAMN GOOD MIME, JERRY. I TELL YA.

HOW'S A WORKING MAN SUPPOSED TO MAKE HIS LIVING IN THIS ECONOMY IF INVISIBLE DAMN BARRIERS JUST SPRING UP OUTTA NOWHERE, HUH?

TIMES ARE HARD ENOUGH FOR HONEST FOLK. THAT'S TRUE.

SOMETHING UNNATURAL'S GOING DOWN IN VEGAS. MORESO THAN NORMAL.

YOU SEE THAT NECKLACE THING HANGING ON THE SIGN THERE?

USING DEDUCTIVE REASONING, I FIGURE THAT MAY JUST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS. ALTHOUGH WHAT IT MEANS, EXACTLY...

IT IS AN IMMENSELY POWERFUL AND INCREDIBLY OLD AMULET FROM A DIMENSION VERY NEAR TO HERE BUT YET INCREDIBLY FAR AWAY...

HUH?

AND, IF THE SPIRIT WORLD SINGS TRUE, IT IS CURRENTLY ALL THAT IS STOPPING THE PLANET EARTH BEING ENTIRELY OVERRUN BY THE NEFARIOUS DENIZENS OF *HELL ITSELF.*

DON'T MIND THE DOCTOR. HE DOES LOVE A BIT OF MELODRAMA.

BUT HE'S RIGHT ABOUT THE HELL THING, YOU KNOW.

Daimon Hellstrom, Son of Satan.

Doctor Strange, Master of the Mystic Arts.

HOW'S A WORKING MAN SUPPOSED TO MAKE HIS LIVING IN THIS ECONOMY IF THE PLANET EARTH IS ENTIRELY OVERRUN BY THE NEFARIOUS DENIZENS OF *HELL ITSELF?*

BETTER CALL THIS IN.

I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO PASS THE BARRIER.

YOU WON'T SUCCEED, DAIMON. THAT TRINKET WILL STOP *ANYTHING* GETTING IN OR OUT. WHICH WE CAN CURRENTLY BE *VERY* THANKFUL FOR.

HMMM. I WONDER WHY IT'S HERE. THE LAST I SAW OF IT, I GAVE IT TO HAWKEYE TO TRY AND HELP HIM CAPTURE SOMETHING IMMENSELY DANGEROUS.

WHICH WAS?

"THE GHOST RIDER.

"BLAZE IS INVOLVED IN THIS, SOMEWHERE, I IMAGINE. VEGAS STRIKES ME AS HIS SORT OF TAWDRY PLAYGROUND."

NNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNHHHHH!!!

Blackheart's Hell Centrifuge.

Johnny Blaze, Ex-Ghost Rider.

TOLD ALEJANDRA I COULD KEEP THIS... THING...SPINNING IN ORDER TO STOP...EARTH BEIN' SUCKED DOWN INTO HELL.

MAY HAVE LIED ABOUT THAT.

ALEJANDRA, GIRL. YOU BEST HURRY SOME.

I'M NOT... SURE HOW LONG I CAN DO...THIS.

IT'S UP TO YOU TO SAVE THE DAY.

MAGIC FORCES... NNNNNNN...DAMN... RIPPING ME TO...

...PIECES.

YOU'RE THE ONE TRYING TO SPREAD THE LAKE OF FIRE OVER HUMANKIND?

Blackheart,
SON OF MEPHISTO.

GUILTY.

Red Hulk

YOU LOOKED A LITTLE DIFFERENT WHEN YOU CONNED ME INTO RIDING THAT GIANT CENTRIFUGE AND OPENING UP THE DOORS OF HELL FOR YOU!

NOW THERE'S AN EVERYDAY CAUTIONARY TALE WE CAN ALL LEARN A LESSON FROM.

YOU MADE HORROR SHOWS OUT OF MY BLOOD?

NO. THIS IS BAD. THIS IS REALLY BAD.

Ghost Rider

HULK'S ACTUALLY... SCARED?

Venom

X-23

HE'S RIGHT TO BE.

THAT MIRROR? IT'S AN INTERESTING ADDITION TO A ROOM. YOU STARE INTO IT AND WHAT COMES OUT IS YOUR ANTITHESIS.

BOTH YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH AND YOUR MOST...PERSONAL WEAKNESS.

A LIFE CREATES SUCH SPECIFIC WOUNDS.

Ichor

The Evangelist

Encephalon

X-666

AND YOURS IS VERY INTERESTING, ALEJANDRA.

HUH?

IT'S A WOUND I COULD HEAL FOR YOU.

GARI OYLE! TAKE A SQUADRON, FIND OUT WHAT'S STOPPING THE EXPANSION OF MY KINGDOM AND DESTROY IT!

LOVE IT WHEN YOU'RE MASTERFUL.

NOW...

I WANT THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE, AND WHAT THE PRINCE OF HELL WANTS, HE TENDS TO GET.

ANTITHESES! KILL THE REST OF THEM!

SWASSHH

DAMMIT!

YOU COME TO VEGAS FOR SOME PERFECTLY RESPECTABLE ALCOHOLISM AND SELF-PITY, AND THIS IS WHAT YOU GET?

IT'S DEPRESSING!

GHOST RIDER! FOLLOW THE BUTT-UGLY ONE WITH THE WINGS. KEEP THIS MADNESS FROM SPREADING ANY FURTHER!

STOP HER! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?!

BOSSY SUNBURNT STEROID FREAK.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

COVER IT UP IN BUFF MONSTER-HIDE ALL YOU WANT.

I CAN SMELL A DESPERATE OLD MAN A MILE AWAY.

DESPERATE OLD MAN?

SHE SEEMS NICE.

SHUT UP.

ICHOR... FOLLOWS!

GARGOYLES CAN'T MATCH ME FOR SPEED.

THIS'LL BE EASY.

PERHAPS...

BUT FIRST, ALEJANDRA... I HAVE AN OFFER FOR YOU...

WE CAN DEAL WITH YOUR GOING AWOL LATER, SOLDIER. THIS IS *BLACKHEART* WE'RE DEALING WITH. WE NEED TO GET BACK UP THERE AND...

YEAH, YEAH. I GOT THIS ONE.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A CHALLENGE? MY CHALLENGE.

A GOOD LITTLE ONE IS ALWAYS GOING TO LOSE TO A GOOD BIG ONE, MY FOOTBALL COACH ALWAYS TOLD ME.

I AIN'T BIG ON CHURCH, POPS. AND YOU LOOK SO... WEAK.

WEAKNESS?

YOU KNOW *ALL* ABOUT WEAKNESS, DON'T YOU, *SON?*

FER INSTANCE...JUST HOW BAD HAVE YOU COME TO RELY ON THAT ALIEN SUIT OF YOURS?

WHA... HOW ARE YOU...

WAIT!

THE WEAK ALWAYS GO LOOKING FOR POWER FROM OTHER THINGS. A FOOTBALL, A GUN, A SYMBIOTE...

GET HANDED A LIMITLESS THING AND YOU TURN IT INTO A PAROCHIAL CRUTCH.

GIVEN YOUR SOMEWHAT GLARING PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS, I GUESS YOU'RE ALWAYS GONNA NEED A CRUTCH OF SOME SORT THOUGH, RIGHT?

SORRY, *TWO* CRUTCHES.

THE ALIEN SUIT'S ONE... YOUR OWN LITTLE SCI-FI SUPER-WHEELCHAIR.

ALCOHOL WOULD BE THE OTHER.

FOLLOWING IN DADDY'S FOOTSTEPS...

THE PRECIOUS THINGS WE INHERIT, EH? THAT OUR PARENTS PASS DOWN TO US.

THE FATHER. THE SON...

YOU THINK THEY ***KNOW*** WHAT THEY'RE GIVING US, ON SOME SUBCONSCIOUS LEVEL, FLASH?

DADDY KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING TO YOU, YOU KNOW, WITH THE DRINKING AND THE BEATINGS.

HE JUST DIDN'T ***CARE***. HE BARELY NOTICED YOU EXISTED.

YOU WERE ***CRIPPLED*** LONG BEFORE THE WAR TOOK YOUR LEGS.

YOU! MS. WOLVERINE OR WHATEVER YOUR DAMN NAME IS!

THIS...

ARE YOU *LISTENING* TO ME?

THIS IS *HELL.* BUT...

YOU'RE WONDERING HOW YOU CAN BE IN HELL IF YOU DON'T HAVE A SOUL?

AWWWW.

IT'S SO SWEET THAT YOU CARE.

POOR X-23!

A MURDERING THING IS ALL SHE'LL BE!

GROWN AS A CLONE TO SLASH AND KILL!

HER INHUMAN CRIMES WILL MAKE YOU ILL!

YOU'RE THE BLONDE, PURE, ALL-AMERICAN CHEERLEADER I CAN NEVER BE. I GET IT. I'M NOT THAT UPSET BY IT.

HELL'S GOING TO HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT.

BLACKHEART STOLE MY BLOOD AND USED IT TO CREATE MONSTERS, AND HE'S GOING TO DIE FOR THAT.

YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT HEROISM, DON'T YOU?

IT'S *MURDER.*

AAAAAHHHH!

I'M YOUR ANTITHESIS BECAUSE I'M MORE THAN YOU, DO YOU "*GET*" THAT?

I HAVE TWO LAYERS. I'M "*NUANCED.*"

ON THE SURFACE, I SMILE AND AM SWEET. I LOVE MY MOM AND DAD AND THE PRESIDENT AND APPLE PIE.

BUT BENEATH THE SURFACE, I'M A REMORSELESS KILLER.

MOST HUMANS ARE "*NUANCED*", YOU KNOW. THEY MAY NOT BE KILLERS, BUT THERE'S AN INNER LIFE THAT THE WORLD NEVER GETS TO SEE.

THUNK

YOU'RE NOT "*NUANCED.*"

BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT HUMAN.

YOU ARE EXACTLY WHAT WE SEE ON THE SURFACE. A CHEAP WOLVERINE KNOCK-OFF.

A KILLER.

THAT'S RIGHT...TRY AND DO WHAT YOU DO. THE *ONLY* THING YOU CAN DO.

KILL.

WHERE SHE'S GOIN'...SHE'LL BE RIPPED TO PIECES IN THERE ALONE! STRATEGIC STRENGTH IN NUMBERS. WE NEED TO WORK IN A *GROUP*.

UNDER *MY* ORDERS.

GOD, I MISS THE MILITARY.

MMMPPPHHHH!

MMMMMMPPPHHH!

THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.

SO MUCH OF PROJECTING AUTHORITY IS IN THE VOCALS THOUGH.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE, ANYWAY? A BRAIN?

YOU'RE CONFUSED, SON! THE GREEN ONE'S THE DUMMY. IF YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE SOME KIND OF OPPOSITE.

I HAVE A FINELY HONED TACTICAL MIN...

STOP.

HUH?

HOW ARE YOU...

DROP AND GIVE ME TWENTY.

YOU... YOU'RE GIVING ME ORDERS?

IS THAT IT?

FEEL TERROR.

AAAAA!

ATTEN-HUT!

SMASHHH

WHAT...WHAT ARE THOSE... THINGS? ARE THEY INSECTS? OH GOD.

EXPERIENCE DEPRESSION.

THE OTHERS... WOULDN'T FOLLOW MY ORDERS. NO ONE... FOLLOWS MY ORDERS ANYMORE. THEY USED TO BUT...

CRY FOR YOUR...

MOTHERRRRRR!

BOP EYES

POP EYES

ENTERTAINING.

I DO LOVE A BIT OF PREYING ON PERSONAL FRAILTIES.

BUT WHILE IT TAKES THE SUPERFREAKS OUT OF THE GAME IT DOESN'T GET ME THE TWO THINGS I WANT.

ONE: THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE.

"AND TWO: FOR HELL TO SPREAD ACROSS THIS HAIRY FLESHBAG OF A PLANET."

THE RIDER'S GOING TO GET THERE BEFORE US!

WORD SPREADS FAST IN HELL, ALEJANDRA.

I KNOW WHAT YOU DID IN NICARAGUA.

GET. OUT. OF. MY. HEAD!

SWEETIE, I'M *BLACKHEART*. I'M THE PRINCE OF HELL.

IF YOU WANT TO GET YOUR HANDS ON THE SIN YOU WIPED OUT OF THOSE IMPOVERISHED PEOPLE. RETURN THEIR HUMANITY TO THEM...

...JUST ASK AND IT'S YOURS.

ONE SMALL DISCLAIMER: IF YOUR ANTITHESIS RIPS YOUR SOUL TO SHREDS, THEN THIS OFFER IS NULL AND VOID.

THAT ACTUALLY HURT.

WHAT ARE YOU?

I AM THE *BLOOD OF THE GODS!*

I AM PURE RETRIBUTION, GIRL. WITHOUT YOUR HUMAN FRAILTIES.

YOUR BRAND OF VENGEANCE IS NOT *HOLY.* IT IS JUST SELFISH MORTAL *REVENGE.*

I AM HUMANITY'S ULTIMATE *REPRISAL.*

AND YOU HAVE *SO* MUCH TO PAY FOR, ALEJANDRA.

"YOU'RE RIGHT."

ALEJANDRA WAS A BAD GIRL.

"YOU WANT ME TO CRY FOR FORGIVENESS?"

THERE IS NO FORGIVENESS.

"YOU PLAY ON WEAKNESS."

THERE IS NO WEAKNESS.

"YES."

YOU MAY HAVE POWER OVER ALEJANDRA.

BUT ALEJANDRA IS DEAD.

THE GHOST RIDER'S ALL THAT'S LEFT!

UNNNHH...

UGH. HE WAS HUMAN DESPITE ALL THAT. AT LEAST SOMEONE STILL IS.

NOW, WHERE DID THE GARGOYLE GO?

THAT WAS... IMPRESSIVE.

I COULD REALLY USE A SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE IN MY NEW KINGDOM.

SO, HOW'S ABOUT I GIVE YOU THE NICARAGUAN SOULS AND YOU DO ME A LITTLE FAVOR IN RETURN.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

"OH NO..."

WHAT WAS THAT, STEPHEN?

I SENSE GREAT...

NEVADA

"...WEAKNESS."

...HU...

...HELP...

I DON'T THINK WE CAN STOP THIS FROM SPREADING.

HELL... STEPHEN.

HELL IS COMING.

VENOM #13.2
"CIRCLE OF FOUR PART THREE"

Las Vegas, Nevada.
At The Border Of Hell.

"HMM...THERE ARE QUESTIONS EVERY MORTAL SHOULD ASK THEMSELVES.

"ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IS...

"WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO *DIE* FOR?

"OR, MORE TO THE POINT...

"WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DIE TO *STOP*?"

THEY WON'T...

WHY WON'T THESE... CUTS...

...HEAL?

AW NOW, X-23, YOU'RE A CLEVER LITTLE PIGLET. YOU KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT.

HEALING FACTORS DON'T WORK IN HELL. AND THIS IS HELL. ON EARTH.

GOOOOOO HELL!

YAY!

X-666.

BLACKHEART'S THRONE ROOM IS AT THE TOP OF THIS STAIRWELL. KILL HIM, AND YOU CAN STOP HELL SPREADING TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

JUST IGNORE THE SCREAMS OF THE ORDINARY PEOPLE OUT IN THE STREETS. *HEROES* CAN SAVE THEM. AND THAT AIN'T YOU.

GO *KILL*. GO DO YOUR *MISSION*.

YOU ARE MY ANTITHESIS. I UNDERSTAND.

WHAT I DO NOT UNDERSTAND IS THAT YOU WORK FOR BLACKHEART, YET YOU WOULD LET ME JUST...WALK UP TO HIM.

WELL, LAURA. HELL IS ALL ABOUT LENGTHENING *TORMENT*. YOU'RE CURRENTLY IN AGONY AND, NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU STRIVE, YOU'RE *NOT* GOING TO SUCCEED.

AND ALSO, WHY WOULDN'T I LET YOU WALK AROUND THIS PLACE AS YOU CHOOSE?

THIS IS HELL, SWEETUMS.

AND YOU'RE A MURDERING MONSTER.

YOU *BELONG* HERE...

"...YOU ALL BELONG HERE."

DAMN "ANTITHESIS" COST ME TIME.

THE GARGOYLE'S TOO FAR AWAY NOW-- GOT TO GET TO HER BEFORE SHE MAKES HELL SPREAD.

WHERE YOU WILL SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND.

SHUT UP, BLACKHEART AND GET OUT OF MY HEAD!

YOU OFFERING ME A ONE-TIME DEAL IS ONE THING...

...BUT THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE SERVES NO ONE.

AND I DON'T RECALL AGREEING TO WORK FOR YOU YET.

THUNK!!

SO, FOR NOW, I THINK I'LL *KILL* YOUR DEMONS.

...AND SNAP YOUR BELOVED GIRLFRIEND'S NECK.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHA?

YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT IT WILL *COST* ME IF I DO AS YOU ASK?

AHHHHH!!!!!

YOU WANT ANYTHING IMPORTANT YOU HAVE TO *SACRIFICE.*

WAIT...

ABOUT TIME YOU MADE YOUR OWN...

WAIT!!!

HOW MUCH DOES YOUR LITTLE "KINGDOM" MEAN TO YOU, EXACTLY?

NO!!!!

ANTITHESES! TO THE TOWN LIMITS!

Hellvegas.

STOP THE GHOST RIDER!!!

NOW!!!

GOTTA GO, FLASH. THE BOSS IS CALLING ME.

JUST ONE WORD OF WARNING FOR YA.

YOU FOLLOW AND YOU GONNA *DIE.*

YOU FEEL THAT, DON'T YOU, SON?

AW, AND ME AND YER LITTLE BETRAYING SYMBIOTE WERE HAVING SO MUCH FUN MESSING WITH YOUR SOUL.

The Evangelist.

YOU *KNOW* IT.

BUT YOU PUT YER LITTLE BLACKHEARTED SUIT BACK ON, BY ALL MEANS.

AFTER ALL, YER *NOTHING* WITHOUT IT.

HULK?

THAT... BRAIN MATTER... THING, IT KNEW. IT KNEW EXACTLY WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF.

IT MADE ME CRY FOR MY *MOTHER*.

YEAH. ME TOO.

WE DO *NOT* TALK ABOUT THIS.

UNDERSTAND?

UH... YOU'VE GOT A...A...

A WHAT?

NEVER MIND.

GHOST RIDER. EDGE OF TOWN.

I HEARD THAT TOO. SOMETHING'S KEEPING HELL BACK, BUT IF WE DON'T STOP THEM IT'LL SPREAD.

WE CAN'T BEAT THOSE THINGS. AND IT TOLD ME THAT IF I FOLLOWED IT I'D DIE.

IT WAS TELLING THE TRUTH. I... FEEL IT.

YEAH, ME TOO.

SO...

YOU'VE GOT A PLAN, RIGHT?

SOLDIER...

I'VE ALWAYS GOT A PLAN.

I'LL BE BACK SOON, LAURA. I'M NEEDED ELSEWHERE.

KEEP SMILING!

NNNNNNN!!!!

YOU'RE THE LITTLE ASSASSIN THAT'S COME TO MURDER ME?

YES.

YOU'RE WELCOME TO TRY BUT BLACKHEART HAS BODYGUARDS.

YOU MAY JUST RECOGNIZE THEM.

AFTER ALL, THEY'RE MADE FROM YOUR BLOOD.

ARE YOU WATCHING, BLACKHEART? I HOPE SO.

BECAUSE WE'RE BOTH ABOUT TO KNOW THE MEANING OF LOSS.

MY...MY GARGOYLES... WILL--

I'M STILL THE GHOST RIDER.

YOU'VE CAUSED A LOT OF SUFFERING HERE. YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR THAT.

THWAK!

THAT IS DECIDEDLY *UN-AMERICAN* BEHAVIOR!

AAAAHHH!!!

YOUR GARGOYLES ARE WISE ENOUGH TO RECOGNIZE A SPIRIT OF GOD'S PURE WRATH OFFERING MUCH-NEEDED VENGEANCE.

AND IF I CAUSE YOUR BOYFRIEND AGONY AS HE WATCHES? WELL, THAT SITS FINE WITH ME.

LAST CHANCE, ALEJANDRA...

TAKE BLACKHEART'S DEAL AND JOIN US...

ORPH PHURM IMTH GHELLLLTTHHH PHOFETHERRR!!!

ENCEPHALIS SAID, "OR BURN IN HELL FOREVER."

YOU CAN'T BEAT THE THREE OF US, ALEJANDRA, AND, LET'S FACE IT...

YOU *BELONG* WITH US MORE THAN YOU DO WITH THEM.

GOD'S SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE YOU MAY BE, BUT YOU CARRY *DEMON* INSIDE YOU.

JOIN US!! YES!!!

A NEW TEAM MEMBER!!! OOH, HOW EXCITING, I KNOW A SONG AND A ROUTINE WE CAN ALL DO ABOUT THAT!!!

I DON'T DO DANCE ROUTINES.

AND WE CAN ALL BE THANKFUL FOR THAT.

CRUNCH

HELLO BAD GUY NEIGHBOUR! I'M VENOM AND THESE BE MY GUNS!

VENOM, EACH ANTITHESIS PLAYS ON OUR SPECIFIC WEAKNESSES. SO CRISS-CROSS TARGETS.

AND DON'T LET THAT THING GET IN YOUR HEAD! FILL YOUR MIND WITH SOMETHING ELSE!

CUE OVER-CATCHY REO SPEEDWAGON!

"NO I CAN'T FIGHT THAT FEELING ANY MORRRRRRE..."

HA! IT'S WORKING!!!

THEY LIED ABOUT US DYING HERE!!! TACTICS PLUS A BIG RED FIST WINS!!

BOOM!

GHOST RIDER, WE HAVE THIS.

GO! STOP THAT GARGOYLE.

YOU FEEL YOUR FISTS ARE STRONGER THAN HELL?

YOU ARE A *FOOL.*

THOOOM!

YOU KILLED HIM YOU SONOFA--

YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS!

SHOW ME... ...WHAT'S INSIDE.

NOTHING.

RIIIIPPPP!

THERE IS NOTHING.

RAAAAAAAAA!!!!!

BRRAAAAAAPPPPP!!!

GO! I'LL DEAL WITH THEM!

RED HULK JUST DIED SO YOU COULD OUTRACE THAT GARGOYLE AND STOP HELL SPREADING.

YOU CAN'T FIGHT THEM ALONE. THEY'LL KILL YOU LIKE THEY KILLED RED HULK.

LIKE THEY'VE KILLED ME.

SO THEY'LL KILL ME.

BUT FIRST I'LL HOLD THE LINE.

RAAAAA!!!!

YOU MADE THESE...THINGS... FROM MY...

AAHHHH!!!

NNNN!!!!

HNPH!!!

...BLOOD.

YOU MADE THESE... HORRORS FROM...

FROM YOU. YES.

CLONES. JUST LIKE YOU.

KILLING THINGS.

SOULLESS THINGS.

THEY'RE NOT LIKE ME!!!

THEY'RE NOTHING LIKE ME!!!

WAIT!

DON'T YOU WANT TO KNOW IF CLONES HAVE SOULS? I CAN TELL YOU, LAURA.

I MADE THEM. I KNOW THE ANSWER.

I... YES.

SILLY GIRL. YOU'RE SUFFERING IN HELL RIGHT NOW.

YOU CAN'T BE IN HELL WITHOUT A SOUL.

ONLY TROUBLE WITH SOULS?

THEY MAKE PEOPLE STUPID.

CLICK

I HOPE THAT KNOWLEDGE COMFORTS YOU AS YOU DIE.

WHA....

Nooo!

HMMM...

WHAT WAITS BENEATH HELL FOR A SOUL WHO HAS KILLED AS MANY AS YOU?

"HEH...YOU'RE GONNA FAIL, YOU KNOW THAT...

"...YOU'VE ALREADY FAILED."

WE'VE DONE THIS DANCE ONCE BEFORE.

I KNOW *ALL* YOUR WEAK SPOTS, SON. AND THERE'S A TRUCKLOAD.

CAN'T BEAT ME IF YOU CAN'T BEAT YOURSELF. I KNOW WHAT YOU *ARE*.

YEAH? SO DO I.

I'M A SOLDIER!

THOSE BIBLE PAGES WILL CUT ANYTHING TO SHREDS, HUH?

WHAT ARE YOU...

YOU... CAN'T...KILL... ME!!

YEAH, I CAN.

YOU'RE NOT A PERSON.

YOU'RE JUST ALL MY SOFT SPOTS! MY WEAKNESSES! MY INSECURITIES AND INADEQUACIES!

I CREATED YOU...

...SO I CAN DAMN WELL KILL YOU!!!

ACK...

I DID IT.

I HELD THE LINE.

YES.

YOU DID.

SNAP!

DARLING, IF YOU'RE WATCHING...

THE RIDER'S GOING TO GET TO THAT AMULET BEFORE ME.

ALEJANDRA, LISTEN TO ME.

SHUT UP, BLACKHEART. ONE OF YOUR ANTITHESES RIPPED MY CHEST WIDE OPEN.

I CAN FEEL MYSELF DYING. WHAT CAN YOU OFFER A CORPSE?

I'LL PUT THE SOULS BACK INTO THOSE PEOPLE IN NICARAGUA! I'LL DO IT EVEN IF YOU DIE.

STEPHEN...

SOMETHING IS...

IT'S THE *RIDER!*

REMOVE THE AMULET, ALEJANDRA.

DESTROY THE AMULET...

...AND I WILL PUT RIGHT THOSE WHO YOU WRONGED.

THOSE PEOPLE IN NICARAGUA WILL BE WHOLE AGAIN. THEY WILL BE PROTECTED IN MY NEW KINGDOM.

YOU WILL MAKE *AMENDS* FOR THE WRONG YOU DID. YOU WILL BE *REDEEMED.*

I SWEAR!

RIDER...

IT'S A WOMAN...

WHO... DID THIS TO YOU?

WHAT ARE YOU...

DON'T!!!

THAT AMULET IS ALL THAT'S HOLDING HELL BACK FROM ENGULFING THIS PLANET.

PUT IT BACK ON THAT SIGN. NOW!

I'M SORRY.

IMPOSSIBLE...

WHAT COULD KILL THE GHOST RIDER?

HELL, STEPHEN.

AND NOW IT'S HERE.

VENOM #13.3
"CIRCLE OF FOUR PART FOUR"

I HAVE *DESTROYED* THE *AMULET* TO UNDO MY *SINS*.

IN DOING SO, I HAVE GASSED THE WORLD AND SET IT AFLAME.

HELL WILL TAKE IT ALL.

WHY AM I NOT DEAD?

YOU *SHOULD*... BE!

YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO CHOOSE SACRIFICE...

YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO CHOOSE...

...DESTRUCTION!

BLACKHEART?

I DIDN'T... RAISE YOU... FOR THIS...

ADAM?! YOU WERE HIM!

YOUR TRAINING, KEEPING ME LOCKED AWAY FROM THE WORLD...

...WAS ALL PART OF THIS SICK PLAN.

HHHHSSSSSSSS....

HOW DID I NOT SEE THIS BEFORE?!

BECAUSE THERE WAS A *VEIL* OVER YOUR EYES, *ALEJANDRA.*

IT WAS THERE *ALL* YOUR LIFE. IT FOLLOWED YOU FROM THE *DARK PLACE* YOU WERE RAISED, EVEN INTO THE *LIGHT.*

NOW WHO--I WARN YOU...

BUT THAT VEIL HAS BEEN LIFTED, BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T MAKE THE CHOICE ADAM WANTED OF YOU.

YOU CHOSE YOUR OWN WAY. DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

I'M SORRY I COULD NOT BE WITH YOU, I SEARCHED FOR SO LONG.

YOUR STRONG, SHINING HEART HAS BROUGHT US TOGETHER AT LAST.

MAMACITA-- IT *IS* YOU.

IT IS!

M... MOTHER...?

WILL YOU COME BACK TO US, ALEJANDRA?

YOU CAN BE THE PROTECTOR MEXICO NEEDS.

I WILL. FROM NOW ON.

AND IT WILL BE DONE MY WAY, MAMA.

VVVVVRRRRMMMMM RRRRMMMMMM

THE WAY OF THE GHOST RIDER!!

THAT ONE GETS ME RIGHT HERE.

COME ON, DOCTOR, WHAT DO YOU THINK HAS HAPPENED?

SOMETHING I'VE NOT SEEN IN MY EXPERIENCE AS EITHER A SORCERER OR A DOCTOR.

WHAT--

WHAT IS IT, DOC?

I CAN TAKE IT.

I KNOW YOU CAN. HOLD YOUR ARM UP AND LOOK, MR. THOMPSON.

IN BLACKHEART'S FINAL ATTACK, THE ALIEN SYMBIOTE WAS FUSED PSYCHICALLY TO YOUR BODY AS WELL AS PHYSICALLY.

BUT ONLY ONE LIFE FORCE COULD STAY, AND IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, YOUR BODY WAS ASSERTING THAT CONTROL.

AS WITH YOUR BATTLE AGAINST THE DEVIL SPAWN, IT APPEARS YOU HAVE WON.

YES... YES!!

MY LEGS!!

I CAN MOVE AGAIN... IT'S ALL ME!

I FEEL GREAT!

I'M SURE YOU DO, BUT STILL TAKE IT EASY.

WE WANT TO THANK YOU-- YOU KEPT THE WORLD FROM GOING DOWN, FLASH.

YOU KNOW, *THE AVENGERS* COULD USE A FIGHTER LIKE *YOU.*

THANK YOU, *CAPTAIN AMERICA.*

BUT I DON'T THINK I WANT TO GO OUT AS *VENOM* EVER AGAIN.

THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT, FLASH.

I WAS KINDA HOPING TO TAKE MY LIFE IN A *DIFFERENT* DIRECTION NOW. DO SOME THINGS I *CAN'T* IN COSTUME.

AND YOU'VE PROVEN THAT YOU CAN TAKE ON GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.

YOU CAN'T MEAN...NO WAY.

YOU WANT *ME* TO BECOME THE NEXT *SPIDER-MAN?!*

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

GET OUT OF MY *FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD*, OCTOPUS!

ARE YOU OKAY, MISS?

WHUPH!!

YES, BUT COULD YOU SAVE ME AGAIN WITH *LESS* SHOWING OFF?

RESCUING YOU IS *DEMANDING* WORK, MISS BRANT.

I CAN GUARANTEE A RAISE, SPIDEY.

HO *HO*, I LIKE *THAT* HAPPY ENDING.

WONDER HOW GENERAL HULKSTACHE IS DOING...

RHHR. DISGUSTING.

WE DID IT! THE *HELLZONE* IS RETREATING FROM VEGAS!

GOOD WORK, RED HULK, YOU SMASHED OUR ANTI-DUDES!

THOMPSON, WHAT ABOUT BLACKHEART?

HE'S LOST HIS POWER, HE WILL NOT RETURN.

DOCTOR STRANGE?

I COULD NOT BREACH THE BARRIER, BUT YOU FOUR HAVE WON THE DAY FROM WITHIN.

AS I EXPECTED. PUT THE *RIGHT* SQUAD IN PLACE, AND LET THEM DO WHAT THEY DO.

RIGHT, ROSS?

CAP. DON'T CALL ME BY THAT--

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SERVE IN SECRET ANYMORE, ROSS. THE PUBLIC HAS BEEN WATCHING THIS AND KNOWS WHAT WAS AT STAKE.

I WANT TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

3

WE'RE LIVE AT GROUND ZERO IN LAS VEGAS, AND CAPTAIN AMERICA IS GOING TO SPEAK!

TODAY A GREAT EVIL HAS BEEN BEATEN BACK--BY FOUR PEOPLE YOU PROBABLY FEARED.

BUT WE SHOULD KNOW NOW THAT HEROES COME IN ALL FORMS. EVEN ONES THAT LOOK LIKE THREATS TO US.

3

THIS MAN GAVE UP HIS CAREER AND RISKED HIS HUMANITY TO DO WHAT NEEDED TO BE DONE TO HELP THE WORLD.

IT'S TIME WE WELCOMED HIM BACK INTO THE SERVICE OF OUR NATION. YOU KNEW HIM FOR YEARS AS--

"....GENERAL THADDEUS ROSS OF THE ARMY AIR FORCE."

WHAT'S THE STATUS, GENERAL FORTEAN?

U.S. AIR FORCE

YOUR *BUSTERS* HAVE BROKEN THE RANKS, ROSS.

ONE LAST PUSH SHOULD GET US THROUGH A.I.M.'S INNER DEFENSE TO WHERE M.O.D.O.K. IS HOLED UP.

I THOUGHT THEY'D ALREADY BE IN BY NOW!

DON'T BE SO HARD ON THEM...

"...SINCE YOU BROUGHT THE HULKS IN LINE TO SERVE, A.I.M. IS GOING TO BE ROLLED OVER LIKE EVERY OTHER EVIL EMPIRE YOU'VE GONE AFTER.

"BETTY IS ESPECIALLY TURNING OUT TO BE A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK."

SOMEONE TELL MY DAD TO SEND US AFTER A *REAL* FORCE NEXT TIME!

HULK SMASH!

STAY DOWN.

HELL, THEY MOVE SO FAST I MISS OUT ON HALF THE FUN!

HOLD THE FORT, REGGIE. I'VE GOT SOME SMASHING TO DO.

ROGER THAT, GENERAL.

WHEN JOHNNY COMES MAR-CHING HOME AGAIN, HUR-RAH, HUR-RAH...

NOW WHAT ABOUT LITTLE MISS CLAWS-IT-ALL?

NO!

BLACKHEART!!

GOOD TRAP-- DIDN'T THINK YOU'D SURVIVE THAT, LAURA.

NOT EVEN SURE I WOULD.

WOLVERINE!

BLACKHEART CAUGHT YOU OFF GUARD BY HITTING YOU WHERE IT HURTS MOST.

NOW... DO THAT TO HIM.

I WILL.

EH? X-23, SHOULDN'T YOU BE--

DEAD?

NO.

THAT WOULD BE *YOU.*

SHHNNNNK

WILL THIS REALLY KILL HIM?

HE'S A DEMON, LAURA. I DON'T THINK HE CAN DIE, BUT YOU MAY HAVE KICKED HIM OUT OF THE WORLD.

SAME DIFFERENCE, I'D TAKE THAT.

THANKS FOR COMING FOR ME.

I'D LIKE TO TAKE CREDIT, BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT BROUGHT ME HERE.

WHEN YOU SEE, YOU'LL UNDERSTAND.

AND KNOW WHY YOU GOT PULLED INTO THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE.

A WEAPON X LABORATORY!

RIGHT. BLACKHEART WAS BEHIND THE PROGRAM ALL ALONG.

IT ALL TIED INTO HIS HELL-ON-EARTH UNSTOPPABLE ARMY OF DARKNESS HOO HA.

HE WANTED TO MOVE INTO THE EVIL SCIENCE BUSINESS SINCE HIS OLD MAN ALREADY CORNERED THE MARKET ON DARK MAGIC.

BET YOU FOUND EVEN WORSE THAN THIS WHILE YOU WERE HERE, EH?

WOLVERINE... I FOUND OUT I...

I HAVE A SOUL.

I COULD HAVE TOLD YOU THAT, KID.

AND YOUR LIFE IS YOURS TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

EVEN THE HARDCORE KILLERS TURN OUT GREAT

SUNSHINE AND LOLLIPOPS, THIS IS ALL MADE OF AWESOME AND WIN

I BET IF I PUT MY MIND TO IT I COULD RUN THIS PLACE AS SUCH ALL THE TIME

THE ULTIMATE DESTINATION SPOT.

NAAAHH.

ALEJANDRA... GHOST RIDER!

COME QUICKLY!

YOU SEEM BIGGER, WALL-CRAWLER!

HAVE YOU BEEN BULKING UP?

WE'VE GOT HIM SURROUNDED-- MOVE IN!

HIT HIM HARD!

WE HAVE TO DESTROY IT.

ALL OF IT!

ALEJANDRA!
MAMA! WHY DID YOU GO IN THERE!?!
COME OUT!!!
I DON'T WANT TO COME HERE, THIS IS WHERE ADAM RAISED ME!
I KNOW, MY DAUGHTER. I KNOW.
YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE LIVED.
NOW EVEN THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE CANNOT HELP YOU!
WHAT--I DON'T--
OH I KNOW YOU'RE THE NEW GUY--BUT YOU CAN'T BE SPIDER-MAN UNTIL THE GREEN GOBLIN WELCOMES YOU TO TOWN, BOY!
OH GREAT!
NO TIME FOR FUN, JUST DROPPING OFF MY CITY-WARMING PRESENT.
I THINK IT BROKE IN SHIPPING THOUGH, I HEARD A SNAP.
WHAT--NO! WHAT DID YOU--
BETTY!!! NO GOD, NO!!
I KNOW YOU'VE ALL MISSED ME. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
HULK BUSTERS, SMASH M.O.D.O.K.!
I'VE SPENT MONTHS ALTERING MYSELF. PARTICULARLY MY "BRAIN BLAST" AS YOU CALLED IT.
NOT A PARTICLE BEAM ANYMORE, I USE IT TO NEUTRALIZE ENERGY.
SPECIFICALLY... GAMMA ENERGY.
HOW--?
FALL BACK!!!
AFTER THAT, I CAN GO LOW TECH.
BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA BRAKKA
WE'LL LEAVE NOTHING BUT ASHES!
GAH--GOING TO NEED A BATH TONIGHT.
X-23 TRIGGER SCENT SOLUTION
HELL, I'D RATHER GET HIT IN THE EYE WITH GASOLINE THAN THIS STUFF.
WHAT WERE THEY MAKING IN THAT...
SNIFF SNIFF
THE PHEROMONE! GET OUT NOW!!

TRIED TO END YOU... BEFORE HE TOOK YOU FROM ME...

NO!!! NOT HERE!!!

LET ME OUT!!!

BETTY, HOW COULD-- YOU CAN'T BE--

I'LL KILL HIM. THEM.

KILL THEM ALL AND EAT THEIR HEAARTSSS.

DAUGHTER--

--I SENT YOU INTO THIS, I GOT YOU--

MAKE ME STOP!

MAKE ME STOP!!!

KILL ME!

AAAHHHA!!

BRING HER BACK! ANOTHER CHANCE!!!

WAIT...IT DIDN'T HAPPEN. IT DIDN'T.

CONTROL... NEED CONTROL...

WHY ARE YOU HERE? DID YOU DO THAT TO ME?!

YOU CAN'T BE HERE. YEARS PASSED!!

WHO DID THIS TO US?

THAT'S THE PART YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO ACCEPT.

YOU DID THAT TO YOURSELF.

BULL! WHO ARE YOU!?

SEE WHAT I MEAN?

THERE'S SOMEONE OVER HERE.

BECAUSE YOU LET THE INFERNAL BORDER SPREAD, YOU WERE ALREADY ON THE THRESHOLD.

THERE WAS ONLY ONE PLACE YOU COULD GO ONCE YOU DIED.

WELCOME TO HELL.

NOW MAYBE YOU KNOW WHERE YOU REALLY ARE.

WE WERE FIGHTING *EVIL!*

DOESN'T THAT GIVE US A PASS ON THIS PLACE?!

EVERYONE THINKS IT'S ALL FIRE PITS AND TORTURE, BUT WITHOUT YOUR OWN PERSONAL PARADISE FOR CONTRAST, HELL IS JUST ANOTHER HORRIBLE PLACE TO BE.

NOW EMOTIONAL TORTURE, RENDING OF THE SOUL... THAT'S WHERE IT'S AT!

THAT'S WHY IT'S BUILT TO MAKE THE EXPERIENCE EXTRA SPECIAL *JUST FOR YOU.*

WE DON'T DESERVE TO BE HERE!

YEAH WE DO.

BLAZE SPOKE OF YOU. *MEPHISTO. KING OF HELL*

YOU EACH HAVE EVEN HIGHER, GRANDER DREAMS, I CAN SENSE IT.

AND I CAN TAKE YOU THERE. BUT I WARN YOU, EACH WILL UNRAVEL, WORSE THAN THE LAST.

WE... DIED?

AND WITH EACH, YOU'LL FALL EVEN FARTHER, FOR ETERNITY.

I WONDERED HOW MUCH LOWER I COULD GET.

WHAT REALLY BURNS ME, PARDON THE EXPRESSION, IS THAT THE NEW TERRITORY WAS BROKEN BY BLACKHEART.

HE IS YOUR COMPETITION?

THE WORST KIND. HE'S MY SON.

IT'S ALL ABOUT YOUR EGO.

OH HELL YES. IT "WEREN'T MY IDEAR," AS MR. THOMPSON MIGHT SAY.

I DON'T TALK LIKE THAT.

FORTUNATELY, I CAN EXPLOIT AN EXISTENTIAL LOOPHOLE. SEE, YOU TECHNICALLY SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO *DIE* IN HELL. IN OTHER WORDS...

I CAN FIX IT IN POST

NOW IS WHEN BLACKHEART IS MOST VULNERABLE TO YOU--HE THINKS HE ALREADY WON.

AGREE TO A CONDITION OF MINE AND YOU CAN BE BACK ON EARTH IMMEDIATELY, BEATING THE SNOT OUT OF THAT BOY.

A DAMNED CONTRACT! WHAT ARE YOU, A LAWYER?

NOW *THAT'S* A LOW BLOW.

I FOLLOW A UNIVERSAL CONSTANT. NOTHING WORTHWHILE IS FREE.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, OUR SOULS?

SIMPLE FOOLS--I ALREADY HAVE THAT. YOU ARE *IN HELL.*

YOU CAN NEVER ESCAPE, AND EVEN IF YOU COULD YOU'D HAVE NO BODIES IN THE LIVING WORLD.

ONLY I CAN GIVE YOU ALL THAT BACK--IF YOU JOIN ME IN AN ETERNAL COVENANT.

AT A LATER TIME, I WILL HAVE NEED OF YOU. AN IMPORTANT TASK.

YOU WILL COME TOGETHER AGAIN, AND DO WHAT I REQUIRE. THERE IS NO REFUSING ONCE WE HAVE MADE THIS PACT

NOW.

DO I HAVE YOUR VOWS?

OR WILL I BE SEEING YOU AROUND UNTIL THE UNIVERSE IMPLODES IN HEAT DEATH?

VENOM #13.4
"CIRCLE OF FOUR PART FIVE"

I WISH JERICHO DRUMM HAD SURVIVED TO SERVE AS SORCERER SUPREME.

IT WOULD'VE BEEN GOOD TO SEE HIM GROW INTO THE ROLE.

HE *SHOULD* STILL BE *HERE*.

MORE TO THE POINT

...HE SHOULD BE THE ONE DEALING WITH THIS.

BY GORES OF FORGOTTEN GAL'LNA-- *BLACKHEART HAS DEFEATED THE GHOST RIDER!*

NOT BLACKHEART, STEPHEN--THE INVERSION OF THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE'S VERY SOUL!

AND IT DESTROYED BLAZE'S AMULET!

YET WE REMAIN, HELLSTROM!

HEAR US, FESTERING CANKER OF HELL-- *YOU WILL NOT PREVAIL!*

HOARY HOSTS OF HOGGOTH!

THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE IS FREE OF ITS HOST!

SSSTRRAANGGEE

HEAR ME NOW, SPIRIT! DO *NOT* BE TEMPTED TO FEED AT THIS *TROUGH OF EVIL!*

RETURN FROM WHENCE YOU CAME! YOU MAY *NOT* TAKE YOUR VENGEANCE IN THIS MANNER!

NOW! LEST THIS SEWER CORRUPT YOU FURTHER!

BEFORE YOU ARE MISUSED--BEFORE YOU BRING ABOUT THE *DEMISE OF ALL MAN!*

VENGEANCE WILL BE SERVED.

IT LEAVES WITH PURPOSE, HAVING SELECTED ITS NEXT HOST.

GIVEN THE HASTE WITH WHICH IT GOES THERE IS ONLY ONE CANDIDATE.

ONE SMALL BRIGHT LIGHT IN THIS DARKNESS...

...THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE RETURNS TO JOHNNY BLAZE.

DID IT... KILLED THE WHORE RIDER, DESTROYED THE AMULET-- HELL SPREADS UNABATED.

THE OLD MAN'LL BE REVVED UP FOR GARI OYLE APPRECIATION TIME FOR SURE.

COULD USE SOME PARTY ACTION AFTER THE TURKEY TODAY'S TURNED INTO.

C'MON! GET UP, YOU MESS. GET UP OR--

VENGEANCE!

YERGAH!

WELL, TICKLE MY TAIL...

...GUESS APPRECIATION TIME'S GETTING PUSHED BACK.

A BODY CAN HOLD BACK DEMONS WITH A CERTAIN DEGREE OF GUTS.

DEMONS'RE COWARDS, MOSTLY THE SORT WHO END UP IN THE BIG PIT.

DON'T LIKE ANYTHING STANDS UP TO 'EM.

THE REMOVAL OF MY CHEEK INDICATES THEY'RE CATCHIN' ON...

...OL' JOHNNY BLAZE IS ALL BLUFF.

BLAZE.

SPIRIT'S LOOKIN' FOR A HOST.

ALEJANDRA'S DEAD.

AND AFTER THE LOW DOWN DEBACLE THAT GIRL CREATED-- AIN'T GONNA LET IT INTO THE HANDS OF ANOTHER...

...C'MON THEN, I'LL BE THE DAMNED GHOST RIDER.

SORRY, PUMPKIN'.

I BRING THIS BACK TO DADDY, HE'LL GIVE ME A BIG REWARD.

AND GARI OYLE LIKES HER REWARDS "BIG," IF YOU DIG.

HOPE YOU DO TOO-- HELL'S INMATES ARE ABOUT TA GIVE YOU A BIG ONE, BLAZE!

NO!

THAT BLAZE... HANDSOME FOR A MONKEY.

HOW GOES THE CONVERGENCE?

DAIMON AND STRANGE ARE ALL THAT HOLD US BACK.

DAIMON IS STRUGGLING.

WE ARE CHILDREN OF DEVILS. HIS HEART DESIRES THIS AS MUCH AS MINE.

LOOK WHAT YER BEST GAL FOUND FOR YA, STINKER.

BY BELIAL'S LIE--THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE!

I SHOULD GUT YOU--FEED MY EVIL INTO YOUR HEART--

Y-YEAH ⇒CHOK⇐ LATER, BABY ⇒KOFF⇐ PARTY LATER...

YES. I MUST PREPARE.

WITH THIS VILE FIEND IN MY HANDS...

"...NOTHING OF EARTH CAN STOP BLACKHEART."

...THE MAIN STRIP WAS MOVED YEARS LATER.

THOUGH THE NEW LAS VEGAS STRIP BECAME A WORLD-RENOWNED VACATION DESTINATION, MANY CONSIDERED IT SOULLESS.

A CORPORATE MOSAIC OF CANDY-COLORED SUBLIMINAL MESSAGES, CRUSTED IN DAZZLING NEON, DESIGNED TO INEBRIATE AND BILK THE VERY STUPID.

HOLY BIR

I HOPE YOU'VE ENJOYED YOUR TOUR.

WATCH YOUR STEP.

A-ARE WE DEAD?

WHAT DOES IT MATTER? THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE HAS LEFT ME.

THERE IS NO HOPE FOR THE LIKES OF YOU.

"THE LIKES OF US" MAYBE FEEL LIKE GIVING IT THE OLD COLLEGE TRY.

WE'LL SEE HOW FAR YOUR OPTIMISTIC ATTITUDE GETS YOU IN HELL, FOOL.

HERE, YOUR FEARS ARE REAL.

MY BIGGEST FEAR RIGHT NOW IS BEING SADDLED WITH A LOSER WHO'S ALREADY QUIT.

AGREE.

WE LACK THE FORTITUDE TO WREST THIS WORLD BACK FROM BLACKHEART'S THORNY HANDS.

I SENSE IT IS WORSE THAN IT WAS.

MUCH WORSE.

BLACKHEART HAS THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE.

OUR TORMENT IS YOUR OPTIMISM. ENDLESSLY TRYING AND FAILING. CAN'T YOU SEE?

WE'LL DIE AGAIN AND AGAIN FOR ETERNITY!

WHILE I TRAPPED JOHNNY BLAZE IN THE DOORWAY TO IT ALL--

BLAZE?! BLAZE IS HERE?!

YOU ARE THE FAILED EXCREMENT OF CARBON PAPER.

AND YOUR PARENTS DIDN'T WANT YOU.

AND YOUR UNBORN CHILDREN LIE COLD IN PURGATORY, SINNER.

BETRAY THESE STRANGERS, ROSS. BEFORE THIS CYCLE CONTINUES.

WE'RE ON EARTH--BASIC RULES OF PHYSICS STILL APPLY--KILL ANYTHING IN OUR WAY.

YERAGHH!

SHNKK

HACK-HACK AND SLICE-SLICE!

PUPPET SOUL COOKED IN A PIMP'S TOILET!

WE DIED.

SHLNK

NOW WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE--

MAYBE THIS TIME WE SHOULD WORK TOGETHER?

KRAKOOM

TEAMWORK IS WORTH A TRY.

COMING FROM SURLY SALLY WHO ABANDONED US IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR *LAST* LAST STAND?

NOTHING PERSONAL. I WAS TRAINED TO WORK SOLO.

JUST AS I'M SURE SERVING THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE IS IN ALEJANDRA'S BLOOD.

IT MUST HAVE CHOSEN HER FOR A REASON.

IF JOHNNY BLAZE IS HERE, MAYBE HE CAN HELP HER GET IT BACK?

WANT IN ON THE TEAMWORK BUILDING EXERCISE CAMP, ALEJANDRA?

START WITH YOU TELLING US WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED HERE.

YES, PERHAPS THE TRUTH WILL SAVE US THIS NEW SPIRIT OF FUTILE CAMARADERIE.

Later...

...SO, YES, I THOUGHT I WAS STOPPING BLACKHEART FROM BRINGING HELL TO EARTH--

AND IN DOING SO INADVERTENTLY UNLOCKED THE DEMONIC CENTRIFUGE, SETTING IT ALL IN MOTION.

SOLVES THAT, WE GET THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE BACK TO BLAZE...CLEARLY IT NEVER SHOULD HAVE LEFT HIM.

IT'S NOT A FRIVOLOUS GIRL SWAYING ON WHIMS--THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE CHOOSES ITS HOST CAREFULLY.

BASED ON THAT STORY-- I WOULD SAY IT MADE A MISTAKE.

YOU SEE--WORKING TOGETHER OR NOT--THERE'S *NO HOPE.*

THIS THING ISN'T OVER.

CLEARLY NO ONE ELSE CAN GET IN HERE TO HELP--SO IT'S ON US.

I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THE TEETH-GNASHING AND THE AGONIZING.

WE DO THIS *TOGETHER* OR WE LANGUISH IN HELL *ALONE.*

SHOW OF HANDS, RIGHT NOW, WHO'S GONNA MAKE THE SHOW?

IN OR OUT?

ARMY ATTITUDE, SON.

LET'S SINK THESE SONS OF BITCHES BACK INTO THE GROUND.

I SWEAR, YOU TWO ARE JUST A HAIR AWAY FROM KISSING EACH OTHER.

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL.

HOLD YOUR GROUND!

BY VISHANTI'S BETRAYAL--SHOULD WE FAIL--*ALL IS LOST!*

HOW LONG CAN WE DO THIS, STEPHEN?!

H-HOW LONG CAN WE POSSIBLY HOLD BACK ALL OF HELL?!

WHY DO YOU STRUGGLE TO STOP IT AT ALL, DAIMON?

WE ARE BROTHERS, YOU AND I.

YOU ARE NO TRUE SON OF HELL! YOU'RE A GOOD MAN--YOU WILL NOT FAIL!

STRANGE IS WRONG.

FABRICATING REASSURANCE HE KNOWS YOU CANNOT GIVE.

YOU STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WILL OF YOUR HOME, SOURCE OF YOUR STRENGTH.

THIS IS OUR FATE.

DAIMON?! WHATEVER IS HAPPENING, WHATEVER HELL IS PROMISING YOU--IT IS A LIE!

THINK--WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DO STOP IT?

OUR FATHERS RULE HELL.

FOREVER A PRISON ARMPIT FOR MORTAL MISBEHAVERS.

WE CONTINUE TO STUMBLE ABOUT ON EARTH, AIMLESSLY, POINTLESSLY...

IS THAT NOT YOUR IDEA OF HELL?

THIS HOUR WILL ETERNALLY DEFINE YOU! DO YOU HEAR ME?!

TAKE YOUR SHARE OF THE KINGDOM.

IN THE FEAST OF SOULS.

OUR FATHERS HAVE EATEN. GORGED ON THE FRUITS OF THIS PLANE.

NOW IS OUR TIME.

LOWER YOUR TRIDENT. EMBRACE YOUR FATE.

IT'S SO SIMPLE.

DAIMON-- NO!

WAS THERE EVER ANY DOUBT, STEPHEN?

I TRUSTED YOU--! LIFT YOUR TRIDENT! HOLD THE--

YHERGH!

GHRAGHA!

YOU ARE THE MOST GLORIOUS DOLT, STRANGE.

YOU PUT YOUR FAITH IN A SON OF SATAN TO STOP THE TIDES OF HELL.

YOUR TIME TRULY HAS PASSED, OLD MAGE.

THERE IS NO NEED TO MOCK YOU...

...YOUR FAILURE'S WEIGHT WILL SOON BE CLEAR ENOUGH.

THE CHILL OF THIS PLACE RUNS TO MY CORE.

I REGRETTED ACCEPTING THE SOLO MISSION AS SOON AS I TOOK IT.

MAKE IT QUICK.

FIND BLAZE.

TELL HIM TO SPIN IN THE OTHER DIRECTION.

SUCK HELL BACK DOWN.

BLOW UP THE CENTRIFUGE BEFORE IT CAN TAKE EARTH DOWN WITH IT.

SNIKT

IT SOUNDED SIMPLE WHEN WE CAME UP WITH IT.

BUT FACED WITH ACTUALLY DOING IT... I AM NOT SO SURE.

AFTER ALL, MY FAILURE WOULD ONLY MEAN EVERYTHING IN THE *WORLD* BEING SUCKED INTO HELL.

NO PRESSURE.

DEAR GOD...

H-HELP... ME...CAN'T HOLD ON--

"--CAN'T HOLD ON ANOTHER SECOND."

SO, LIKE, THIS THING WOULD CREATE AN ANTITHESIS OF ANYONE?

WONDER WHAT IT'D MAKE OF ME. SOME NICE HOUSEWIFE WHO COULD BAKE YOU COOKIES AND GIVE YOU CHERUBS TA HUG AN' KISS?

BE SILENT.

WHAT I AM ATTEMPTING-- *VERY* DANGEROUS.

NO TRUE SON OF HELL HAS BONDED WITH THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE.

IF A MISTAKE IS MADE, THE RAW ENERGY RELEASED WOULD DECIMATE FOUR PARALLEL UNIVERSES.

AND THAT'S THE TYPE OF SOUL FEAST I'D PREFER TO RESERVE FOR--

KRASSH

C'MON, PUNK!

KILLBOY

DEVIL SPAWN--

MEET GRIZZLED OLD SON OF A BITCH!

KWOOOOM

YHEGAHGAH!

SHLKK

GAKK-AKK--!

YOU RUN AROUND TRYING TO MAINTAIN ORDER IN THE MIDST OF ALL OF THIS HEART-CRUSHING TERROR.

BECAUSE YOUR *PETITE* INTELLECT CANNOT GRASP THE TRUE *INSIGNIFICANCE* OF ITSELF.

YOUR EGOS ARE SO DISPROPORTIONATE TO THE ACTUAL VALUE OF THE "LIFE" THEY REPRESENT.

THERE EXISTS AN ENTIRE DIMENSION DEDICATED TO FEEDING ON THE MISDEEDS PERFORMED IN YOUR VERY SHORT LIVES.

HELL'S PROLIFERATION IS A BYPRODUCT OF *YOUR* SIN!

KRAKOOM

WE SHOUT A MIGHTY BATTLE CRY.

I HEAR THE WORDS--

--I HELP SAY THEM--

--BUT THEY COME OUT BROKEN.

GWATHOOOOOM

HULK SHOULD BE GRABBING THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE NOW.

INSTEAD HE SITS.

TRANSFIXED ON SOMETHING A MILLION MILES AWAY.

I GET IT TOO.

WE'RE SOAKING IN PURE HELL.

IT AFFECTS EVERY SINGLE THOUGHT.

EVERY SINGLE SENSATION.

EVERY SINGLE BETRAAAYAL.

EEVERY SINGGLE MURRDER!

WE 'AM LLOVE MMURDER!

MMURDER THE BETTRAYORR!

THAT PLEASURE IS RESERVED FOR ME.

STOP--I'LL SHATTER IT! GOD KNOWS WHERE IT'LL GO!

WWE AMM...LOSSING CONTROL, ALEJANDRA!

GIVVE TO USS--THHE PLANN!

#6!% THE PLAN.

THWIPP

NOWW POWWER AMM OURSS!

BLACKHEART HITTING THE KID WITH SOME OF HIS BAD BUSINESS

HERE'S SOME BACK!

GET UP--FATE OF THE WORLD ON THE LINE

KA-BAM

AALL FFORR UsS...ALL FFORREVERR...

YOU MISUNDERSTAND.

IN HELL IT'S YOUR DESIRES THAT HURT YOU.

YOU WANT FOR EVERYTHING...

...YOU GET NOTHING.

YOUR FRIENDS DON'T WANT TO SEE THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE RETURNED TO YOU.

MY OFFER STILL STANDS, ALEJANDRA. ALL YOU DESIRE. YOU CAN BE MY GHOST RIDER.

JUST TELL ME THEIR PLANS.

THEY WENT TO REVERSE THE CENTRIFUGE...TO SEND HELL BACK DOWN.

GARI--GO.

KILL ALL YOU FIND.

AH, MORTALS. SO MANY SCHEMES.

I TRULY LOVE TORMENTING YOU!

WHAT--!

I AM BLACKHEART! THE EMPEROR OF ANGUISH!

LOOK AT ME NOW, FATHER. LOOK AT WHAT I HAVE BECOME!

LOOK AT MY--

WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED...

"...THEY'VE ACTUALLY SURPRISED ME."

WWE AM SMMÄSHH FOR VENGGEANCE.

VENOM #14
"CIRCLE OF FOUR PART SIX"

Hell.
FORMERLY LAS VEGAS.
NO WAY TO PROCESS THIS PLACE.
NO! PLEASE!
NOTHING HAS MADE SENSE FOR DAYS...
YEARS?
RATE OF TIME CONSTANTLY SHIFTING.
SINGLE MOMENTS LINGER, DISTORTING IN SLOW MOTION LIKE A BAD ART HOUSE NIGHTMARE MOVIE.
SOMEONE PLEASE--!
CAN'T TRUST MY SENSES.
NO WAY TO KNOW WHAT'S REAL.
EVERY THOUGHT IS SUSPECT.
HAVE I MADE A SINGLE CHOICE ON MY OWN?
ONLY ONE THING I'M CERTAIN OF...

...GIVING HULK MY SYMBIOTE WAS A BAD IDEA.

SHROOM

HEY-- STOP!

COME BACK!

YOU'RE CRAZY, MISTER! CRAZY LIKE THE REST--

Flash Thompson

HOST OF THE VENOM SYMBIOTE AND FORMER GOVERNMENT AGENT.

TIME SLOWS.

THEY DEVOUR HER. PICK HER APART.

GHRAGHH!

HER REMAINS DECOMPOSE. TURN TO DUST.

THEN TIME SPEEDS UP-- FAST FORWARD.

BLAM

THEIR ATTENTION TURNS TO ME.

TWO CLIPS LEFT...

TWO CLIPS AND...

BLAM

GIVING HULK MY SYMBIOTE WAS A BAD IDEA.

Tower Blackheart.

WWE AMM SMMASHH FFOR VENGEANNCE!

GRRROOOM

GIVING THE HULK MY SYMBIOTE WAS A *BAD* IDEA.

CRAFTY MONKEY.

SO YOU'VE COMBINED, BUT WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?

HELL'S HATRED FUELS ME-- GAKK!

THWIP

WWE DESIRE ONE THINNG.

SCREEEEEE

VENGEANCE.

SPAWN

FEEL OURR PENANCE PUNCH, PUNKK!

The Centrifuge.

X-23
FORMER ASSASSIN.

BLAZE! WHEN I SAY TURN, YOU TURN AND RIDE IN *THE OTHER DIRECTION!*

YOU ARE GOING TO SUCK HELL BACK DOWN AND THEN I AM GOING TO BLOW THIS DOORWAY APART.

C-CAN'T K-KEEP THIS UP--MUCH LONGER, GIRL!

YOU DAMN WELL BETTER BE RIGHT!

Johnny Blaze
FORMER HOST OF THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE.

I SHOULD NOT TELL HIM THIS IS A DICE TOSS.

NEED HIM TO BE CONFIDENT.

NEED HIM TO RETAIN HOPE...

...EVEN AS MINE VANISHES.

HEYA, SUGAR.

YEERAGH!

CLAWS SHRED FLESH FROM BONE.

SEVERED TENDONS...

MY REACTION IS MUD.

OH, BABY, LOOK AT THOSE BLADES--SEXY AND DANGEROUS.

YOU KNOW, WE GARGOYLES ARE VERSED IN BLACK MAGIC.

ALCHEMY FOR EXAMPLE.

MOST METALS TURN TO COPPER DUST SILLY EASY.

NOW...

...HOW 'BOUT A TASTE OF YOUR OWN MEDICINE.

SCREEE--

BLAM

LAST WORDS TO BETTY WERE DRUNKEN AND CRUEL.

SIX ROUNDS LEFT.

TOLD MOM, STILL IN MOURNING, TO LEAVE ME THE HELL ALONE.

NOT LONG NOW...

...GET WHAT I HAVE COMING.

C'MON, STUMPY--

THWUMP

YOU'RE GONNA HELP ME GET THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE BACK.

VROOOOM

THAT MIXED-UP MONSTER IS THE BEST HOPE WE HAVE--

I NEVER AGREED TO THIS!

Alejandra Blaze

CURRENT HOST OF THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE.

YEAH-- WE KEPT IT A SECRET FROM YOU.

WHO ARE YOU TO DECIDE SUCH A PERILOUS COURSE?!

I WILL KILL YOU MYSELF TO GET THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE BACK!

FINE, BUT NOW WE HAVE TO GET TO THE CENTRIFUGE TO MAKE SURE IT'S DESTROYED!

I'M NOT GOING TO HELP YOU!

THMUMP

SKRRECCCCCCCC

BET YOU WILL.

NLINN

WE AMM DDESTROY!

H-HOW... HOW DID YOU...

GRAAKOOOM

SUFFERR NNOW--

OURR PPENANCE STARE!

KRRROKK

FOOL!

THE PENANCE STARE MAKES A MIND RELIVE ALL MISDEEDS AT ONCE.

"MISDEED IS WHAT I DRAW MY STRENGTH FROM!"

SHROOK

SKRNGCH

TWOKK

YERGHGH!!

SCHOMPP

GRRODOOM

BLAM

BLAM BLAM

GHRA--!

PNG

SKN

PNG

BLAM

YOU'RE A FAIR SHOT.

THANKS.

DOOR

BETTER STILL--YOUR GUN ISN'T POINTING AT ME.

HUH?

NO!

HOOF--!

TWUNGG

WOW. YOU LOOK... YOU LOOK SCREWED.

NOT ONLY DO YOU HAVE JERKS FOR FRIENDS--

SOMEBODY RAN OFF WITH YOUR LEGS.

SHNK

GHRAGHH!

RUN, LITTLE SPIRIT, RUN--YOU WILL NOURISH MY HATE!

SCREEEEEEE

FAST...

VRROOOOOOM

NOT FAST ENOUGH.

KRAWTOOOOOM

WANT ANOTHER ROUND, BLONDIE?

YOU GOT ANY FIGHT LEFT FOR MAMA OYLE?

YOUR FINGER TWITCHING... THAT A YES?

PROBABLY NOT.

NOW... WHAT WAS NEXT ON MY "TO-DO" LIST...

KILL BLAZE.

RIGHT.

SEXY MONKEY, REAL SHAME.

CAN ALWAYS NECROMANCY HIM BACK FOR SOME DOWNTOWN TIME.

HAIL MARY.

BLAM

GADOOM

NICE TEAMWORK.

HELL HAS SPREAD--TAKEN OVER THE WEST COAST. I CAN TASTE THE SUFFERING.

ONCE I INGEST YOUR LITTLE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE I WILL BE STRONG ENOUGH TO STORM HELL.

STRONG ENOUGH TO CRUSH MEPHISTO UNDER MY-- WHAT'S THIS?

H'ELIAN'S MIRROR CAULDRON. STEAL NOW THE IMPRESSION OF THIS SOUL'S TRUE FORM.

TWISST ITT.

INNVERRT IT.

WWE FOUNDD YYOURR MIRRORR.

NO!

I HAVE NO ANTITHESIS!

BUT YOU DO, MY CHILD.

LET ME HEAL YOUR SQUALID SOUL.

BLAZE! DO IT NOW!

GO THE OTHER WAY!

YOU GOT IT, AMIGO...

SKKREEEEE

"...FLUSH THIS MUCK BACK DOWN THE BIG DRAIN."

PLEASE-- I'VE COME SO FAR--!

SUNK SO LOW. FEAR NOT, DEAR BROTHER. YOUR SOUL MAY YET BE REDEEMED...

...STEP INTO THE LIGHT.

BLEEP

GRRROOOOM

HE'S GONE.

YOU'VE STOLEN WHAT IS MINE.

HAD YOUR FUN.

RELINQUISH THE SPIRIT TO ITS RIGHTFUL VESSEL.

SHE IS MY HOST.

DAMMIT! WAS THAT ALEJANDRA?!

DID SHE TAKE IT?

YEESS.

HERE...

THANKS FOR THE LOAN, CORPORAL.

GOOD WORK HERE, GENERAL.

THERE YOU ARE...

QUINCY

AGENT VENOM, YOU'RE COMING WITH US.

AVENGERS, TAKE HIM--

WHOA-WHOA-WHOA-- NO. YOU GOT THE KID ALL WRONG, CAP.

HE SAVED THE DAY, SHOWED REAL GRAVEL. HE'S A HERO.

HE IS *VENOM*, GENERAL.

DON'T TRUST THE SYMBIOTE.

I SAVED NEW YORK, LAS VEGAS AND YOU.

WHAT'LL IT TAKE TO GET A BREAK?

WE COULD, UH...MAYBE WE COULD HELP MAKE SURE THE SYMBIOTE STAYS DORMANT.

WE COULD POTENTIALLY SHUT OFF THE SYNAPTIC COUPLING CENTER...

THERE YA GO, CAP. THE NERDS HAVE SPOKEN.

I JUST WANT TO SERVE MY COUNTRY.

ALL RIGHT THEN...

THOMPSON. CORPORAL EUGENE THOMPSON.

FRIENDS CALL ME FLASH.

OKAY, FLASH. MAYBE WE CAN FIND A WAY TO HELP YOU.

PROVIDED YOU DO ONE THING.

SIR?

RETURN MY BIKE.

WHAT HAPPENED BACK THERE...ARE YOU FREE OF THE BLACK INFLUENCE, DAIMON?

DAIMON?

WHAT IS IT?

HMH? OH, NOTHING. I'M FINE.

IT'LL BE FINE, STEPHEN...

"...A PROBLEM FOR ANOTHER DAY."

Hell.

YOU WANT TO GIVE IT ANOTHER TRY?

YES, FATHER. PLEASE, FATHER.

HMMH. WELL, I WAS THINKING OF OPENING MY OWN CASINO. ONE MUCH LESS CONSPICUOUS. OBVIOUSLY.

WANT TO RUN IT?

...YES. PLEASE.

SUCH TORTURE. CONSTANTLY COMING SO CLOSE ONLY TO FAIL. ALWAYS BACK HERE, BEGGING FOR ANOTHER TRY.

YOUR ENTIRE LIFE, A LOOP. YOUR OWN PERSONAL HELL. DEVISED BY SOMEONE WHO HATES YOU VERY MUCH. SUCH CRUEL, UNENDING MONOTONY.

"WHAT TYPE OF FATHER WOULD DO SUCH A THING TO HIS OWN SON?"

Tiny Planet FAMILY FUN CASINO!

VIVA LAS VEGAS 13

FALCONE'S FORTUNE

HMMH?

-KWORF- -KWORF-

YOU THE NEW GUYS?

Y-YEAH... GUESS SO.

WELL, C'MON, YA KOOKS.

WE GOT A DOZEN OVERFLOWING TOILETS OVER AT JOSE RIA'S DISCOUNT ENCHILADA BUFFET.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE THE PRINCE OF HELL AND HIS DOLT BRIDE TO CLIMB THE LADDER THIS TIME...?

ETERNITY

VENOM #15
"HOME AGAIN"

HYBRID.

EXTRACTED FROM VENOM BY A BAND OF CORPORATE SURVIVALISTS.

BONDED TO ONE SCOTT WASHINGTON.

CHK

SCOTT'S BEEN USING HYBRID TO SUPPRESS CRIME IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD.

DONE A FAIR JOB.

BUT THE DEMON WILL TURN.

WHEN THE TIME COMES IT WILL SPAWN.

WHAT THE HE--

I HELPED SPREAD THIS ALIEN PLAGUE.

BUT I KNOW NOW.

THWUPP

WILL BECOME ANOTHER SPORE.

SKKRKEEEEEEEEE

AND I KNOW THE CURE.

KRUCHH

YERGH--!

YOU PUT UP A GOOD FIGHT.

SHOWED REAL HEART.

THAT THING IS BONDED TO YOU AND I DON'T KNOW ANY GOOD WAY TO UNDO THAT.

BROCK? WHAT THE--?

WELL, THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE...

NO! PLEASE, EDDIE! I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU, DO WHATEVER YOU WANT--

I DON'T WANT ANY OF THIS, SCOTT.

BRAK-BRAK-BRAK-BRAK-

GHAKK--

FFFSHHHH

YERAGHH!

KAKK D-DON'T...

D-DESERVE... THIS...

NONE OF US DO. IT'S EITHER YOU NOW...

"...OR THE ENTIRE PLANET LATER."

SO, YES, I THINK WITH THIS THE VENOM SYMBIOTE WILL BE AS SAFE AS ANY OTHER ARMOR OR MAGIC RELIC OR RADIOACTIVE NIPPLE LASERS OR WHATEVER THE REST OF US USE.

The Lighthouse Space Station.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE SECRET AVENGERS.

RADIOACTIVE NIPPLE LASER MAN ISN'T AN AVENGER ANYMORE, *BEAST*. DON'T YOU READ THE NEWSLETTER?

THE GOVERNMENT SCIENTISTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NEURO-INHIBITOR THAT SUBDUES THE SYMBIOTE'S MIND WERE ONLY *HALF* WAY THERE, VALKYRIE.

ENOUGH. REASSURE US THAT THIS MONSTER CAN BE TRUSTED WITH OUR *LIVES* ON THE FIELD.

THE SERUM WAS MISSING A FEW COMPONENTS THAT DR. PYM AND I BELIEVE WILL OFFER A MORE... *COMPLETE* SUBDUING EFFECT.

CORPORAL THOMPSON WILL BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE SYMBIOTE WITHOUT IT PERMANENTLY BONDING TO HIM?

IT ALREADY HAS.

YES. WHEN IT'S NOT BEING USED FOR OFFICIAL AVENGERS BUSINESS IT STAYS HERE, UNDER MY CONTROL.

HANK, THE SYMBIOTE *PYMP*.

I'VE GOT ENEMIES.

I MIGHT NEED THIS THING IN A REAL HURRY ONE DAY.

HURTS TO BE AWAY.

YOU'RE AN AVENGER NOW, FLASH. YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THAT SORT OF THING ALONE ANYMORE.

SURE. I *KNOW*.

BUT I'M WORRIED I'LL END UP IN AN *AWKWARD* SITUATION AND NOT HAVE THE SYMBIOTE WHEN I NEED IT.

I NEED IT NOW.

BURNING IN MY CHEST.

I'M GIVING YOU A NUMBER, IN AN EMERGENCY YOU DIAL IT.

THE SYMBIOTE'S CONTAINMENT VESSEL WILL BE FLOODED WITH PYM PARTICLES, SHRUNK DOWN TO SUBATOMIC SIZE AND BROADCAST TO THE PHONE YOU'RE CALLING FROM.

SO I JUST CALL THIS NUMBER AND...

THE SYMBIOTE WILL EMERGE FROM THE EARPIECE.

THE TEMPORARY EFFECTS OF THE UNSTABLE PYM PARTICLES WILL BE NEGATED, AND YOU'LL HAVE YOUR SEDATED SYMBIOTE.

TEP TEP

ACT INDIFFERENT.

WE'LL MONITOR YOUR USAGE.

TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T ABUSE YOUR ACCESS TO THE SUIT.

WE NEED TO ENSURE YOU'RE NEVER BONDED TO IT.

YOU WERE WEARING THE SUIT WITH NO SEDATIVES FOR DAYS ON END.

BONDING TIME HAS VARIED BASED ON THE USER.

DO YOU FEEL ANY PHYSICAL OR MENTAL WITHDRAWALS?

SELL IT CALM.

LIKE I PRACTICED.

NO.

NOW THAT I'VE GOT THE HANG OF THESE PROSTHETIC LEGS, I'M DAMN GLAD TO BE RID OF THE THING FOR A WHILE.

YOU GOT LUCKY.

I'M GLAD THAT WE COULD MAKE THIS WORK.

TO BE ABLE TO TAKE SOMETHING THAT CAUSED SO MUCH PAIN AND USE IT FOR THE GOOD OF HUMANITY...

I KNOW YOU WON'T LET ME DOWN, CORPORAL.

NO, CAPTAIN, I WON'T.

COME.

I WILL SEND YOU HOME.

'LOT RIDING ON THAT MAN.

YES. IF HE'S LYING...WE COULD HAVE A PROBLEM.

AND THEN THERE'S THE OTHER VERY REAL DILEMMA...

...ARE YOU GOING TO TELL SPIDER-MAN?

YOU EVER FEEL LIKE YOU'RE IN OVER YOUR HEAD?

LIKE YOU'RE BEING TRUSTED WITH MORE THAN YOU CAN POSSIBLY MANAGE?

LOOK ON THE UPSIDE, IF CAPTAIN AMERICA *IS* WRONG ABOUT YOU...

...YOU WILL BE *DEAD* VERY SOON AND WON'T HAVE TO WORRY.

AWESOME. VERY ENCOURAGING.

I'VE READ THE REPORTS. YOU'VE EARNED THIS, CORPORAL.

IT HAS BEEN AN INTERESTING COUPLE OF WEEKS.

MORE INTERESTING ALL THE TIME.

SUDDENLY I'M AN AVENGER, SHRUNK DOWN TO THE SIZE OF AN ANT, BEING SHOWN AROUND A TINY SPACE STATION BY A BEAUTIFUL ASGARDIAN GODDESS...

BEAUTIFUL?

WELL, NO.

I MEAN, YES. FOR SURE.

BUT, I WASN'T TRYING TO PICK YOU UP OR ANYTHING...

ONE THING IS TRUE OF ALL WOMEN BE THEY MORTAL OR GODDESS.

YOU NEED NOT APOLOGIZE AFTER CALLING ONE *BEAUTIFUL*.

IT JUST...IT CAN SEEM SKEEVY.

ONLY IF YOU'RE TRYING TO GET ME INTO BED.

I'M SORRY, REALLY, I'D NEVER TRY...

I MEAN...

ARMY

MOMENTS AGO I WAS BEAUTIFUL.

OH, YOU ARE, I JUST...

ARMY

I APPRECIATE YOU LETTING ME DOWN EASY.

I'VE GOT A GIRLFRIEND.

OR I DID...WE MIGHT BE GETTING BACK TOGETHER.

NO, I WASN'T SAYING YOU WERE INTERESTED-- I WAS, IT'S JUST--

BANG BANG

FLASH?!

OPEN THE DOOR, BUDDY.

IT'S PETE.

BANG BANG

LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE.

YOUR LANDLADY SAID YOU HAVEN'T LEFT THE APARTMENT IN DAYS.

H-HEY, PETER.

SORRY, I WAS... IN THE SHOWER.

I THINK IT'S STRANGE THAT YOU SHOWER IN ALL OF YOUR CLOTHES AND THAT YOU DON'T GET YOUR HAIR WET.

WELL... YEAH... THAT IS STRANGE...

NO BOOZE.

WHEN'D YOU BECOME MY MOTHER, PARKER?

WHEN BETTY SHOWED UP AT MY HOUSE A FEW DAYS AGO, HYSTERICAL, IN TEARS.

SAID SHE'D BEEN STAYING WITH YOUR MOM, TO HELP CONSOLE HER. SAID YOU LEFT TOWN FOR *"WORK."*

SAID YOU CALLED HER IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AND BROKE UP WITH HER OVER THE *PHONE.*

SO SHE CALLED THE V.A.

YOUR SUPERVISOR?

NOBODY DOWN THERE'D EVER HEARD OF HIM.

AFTER DAD DIED... I STARTED DRINKING.

I GOT STONE DRUNK AND I STAYED THAT WAY.

ALL I REMEMBER OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS IS OCCASIONALLY WAKING UP, SCRAPING MYSELF UP OFF OF THE FLOOR AND SHUFFLING MYSELF OUT THE DOOR TO GET MORE WHISKEY.

YEAH. OKAY.

C'MON...

"...LET'S GET SOME FRESH AIR."

SCREAM.

ANOTHER VENOM SPAWN.

THE HOST, DONNA DIEGO, IS A DELUSIONAL SCHIZOPHRENIC.

BAk

TRIED TO KILL ME ONCE UPON A TIME.

SMART AS A WHIP--HARD TO TRACK.

SO I BRING HER TO ME.

SHE'LL HAVE HEARD ABOUT HYBRID.

HEARD ABOUT THE OTHERS.

SHE'LL FOLLOW THE TRAIL I LEFT...

FOLLOW IT TO PURIFICATION.

THANKS FOR COMING, DONNA.

EASIER TO DO THIS HERE.

AAIIEEEE--!

SCKRKEEE

SSKRKEEE

BUT WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

...WHY TAKE BETTY DOWN WITH YOU?

I BROKE UP WITH HER TO KEEP HER AWAY FROM ME, PETE.

TO *KEEP HER* FROM GOING DOWN WITH ME.

BETTY'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT, TOO.

THE WAY YOU HANDLED THIS... IT'S LIKE YOU'RE GOING OUT OF YOUR WAY TO MAKE IT WORSE.

YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO.

I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* YOU'RE TRYING TO DO.

HOW WOULD I?

LAST COUPLE MONTHS IT'S LIKE YOU'RE NOT EVEN HERE ANYMORE.

AND THIS IS COMING FROM THE *PRESIDENT* OF THE "*STRETCHED-TOO-THIN*" FAN CLUB.

IT'S COMPLICATED.

THEN TELL ME ABOUT IT.

WHAT I'M GOING TO TELL YOU...YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE STRONG OPINIONS, PETE.

YOU...YOU PROMISE TO KEEP IT BETWEEN US? NO MATTER WHAT.

I PROMISE.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN...

BREEP BREEP BREEP BREEP

IT'S MY SISTER.

I HAVE TO TAKE THIS.

Jessie

HEY, JESS.

YEAH, BEEN BACK FOR A FEW DAYS NOW.

I GOT... TIED UP.

I KNOW. YEAH.

I HAVE TO MAKE A LIVING, I COULDN'T JUST QUIT MY JOB.

I GET IT. I DO.

OKAY. ALL RIGHT. I'LL BE OVER THERE IN A BIT.

I HAVE TO GO SEE MY MOM. I HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE THE FUNERAL.

ANOTHER MESS I'VE MADE.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

WE'LL CATCH UP LATER.

HEY, JESSE... MOM.

YOU'RE USING THE LEGS.

TAKING SOME TIME TO GET USED TO.

ON THE ROAD THE WHEELCHAIR WAS TOO MUCH OF A HASSLE.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, I'M SORRY I HAD TO GO AWAY SO SOON AFTER THE FUNERAL.

I DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHOICE IN--

EUGENE, I LIVED WITH A LYING DRUNK FOR 46 YEARS, GOD REST HIS SOUL.

IF YOU CAN'T TELL ME THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU, DON'T TELL ME ANYTHING.

I NEVER ASKED VERY MUCH OF YOU. BUT I'M TELLING YOU RIGHT NOW, IF YOU WANT A RELATIONSHIP WITH ME THERE'S *ONE RULE.*

NO MORE LYING.

TOLD HER I'D BEEN DRINKING.

TOLD HER I WAS BACK IN THE PROGRAM.

LOOKED HER IN THE FACE AND LIED.

NO OTHER WAY.

CAN'T TELL HER THE TRUTH.

TRUTH IS-- I PUT HER IN DANGER.

STILL IN DANGER.

CRIME MASTER...STILL OUT THERE.

HE AND JACK O' LANTERN--THE LAST PIECES OF MY MISTAKES.

LAST THING I HAVE TO SET RIGHT.

THEN I CAN START OVER.

WORK THE STEPS.

BE A HERO.

WORK THINGS OUT...

BETTY?

REMEMBER THIS TRIP TO ASPEN?

OF COURSE.

YOU TOLD ME SOME FRIEND HAD CANCELED ON YOU, STUCK YOU WITH A CHALET.

I KNEW YOU'D PLANNED IT TO GET US BACK TOGETHER.

YOU *USED TO BE* SO BAD AT LYING.

I REMEMBER THINKING THAT I SHOULDN'T GO.

SHOULDN'T GET BACK TOGETHER WITH YOU.

JUST SAVE MYSELF THE FUTURE HEARTBREAK.

BETTY--

I DIDN'T COME HERE TO GIVE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO ME.

YOU DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO TALK TO ME FACE-TO-FACE SO YOU DON'T GET TO TALK TO ME FACE-TO-FACE.

YOU GET TO LISTEN.

I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR FATHER.

I KNOW WHAT YOUR CHILDHOOD DID TO YOU, AND I KNOW THAT YOU CAN'T SHAKE IT.

GIVEN WHAT YOU GREW UP WITH IT'S AMAZING YOU CAME OUT AS WELL AS YOU DID.

BUT THE MAN YOU ARE ISN'T ENOUGH FOR ME.

SPENDING THE LAST WEEK WITH YOUR MOTHER--WHILE YOU WERE DRUNK IN A DITCH--OPENED MY EYES.

WHAT YOUR FATHER PUT HER THROUGH IS NOT GOING TO BE MY FUTURE.

SO YOU DON'T GET TO CALL AND BREAK UP WITH ME, FLASH.

BECAUSE IF YOU BREAK UP WITH ME IT MEANS AT SOME POINT YOU'RE GOING TO THINK YOU CAN COME AND WIN ME BACK.

I WON'T LIVE MY LIFE TRYING TO CHANGE AND FIX YOU.

I WANT TO MAKE THIS AS CLEAR AS I POSSIBLY CAN--

WE WON'T *EVER* BE GETTING BACK TOGETHER.

SLAM

BREEP BREEP

HELLO, DR. PYM. YEAH.

I'M READY FOR WORK.

YEAH, HOME LIFE IS GOOD...

"EVERYTHING'S EXACTLY HOW I LEFT IT."

VENOM #16
"CLEMENCY"

SOME PEOPLE THINK THERE AIN'T NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN *PERSONAL* AN' *BUSINESS*.

BUT LIFE'S ALL CONNECTED.

CHEATIN' ON YOUR OLD LADY OR CHEATIN' SOME CUBICLE JOCKEY OUT OF HIS RETIREMENT...

IT'S ALL THE SAME.

DIRT BAG IN ONE EQUALS DIRT BAG IN THE OTHER.

BUT ME, I SEE THE NUANCE IN LIFE. COMPLICATED, YES?

"ME? I'VE KILLED FOR *PERSONAL* REASONS.

"KILLED FOR *BUSINESS*.

"ATE MY GIRLFRIEND.

"A GIRL ANYWAY."

SO, I'M A BAD GUY.

DESERVE LIFE ON YOUR RAFT JAIL.

BUT THERE'S ANOTHER SIDE TO ME. THIS *FLY'S* NUANCED.

"A WEEK BEFORE YOU CAUGHT ME, I SWIPED COUPLE-FEW MILLION DOLLARS FROM A HUMAN TRAFFICKING, DRUG-DONKEY, UGLINESS-PARADE OPERATED BY...

"...NONE OTHER THAN...

"...WAIT FOR IT...

"...THE KINGPIN!"

AND *YOU* WANT TO BRIBE *ME?*

BIG HERO LIKE YOU--? *NAH.* MY PLAN'S BUILT ON YOU BEING A GOOD GUY.

SEE, THE OTHER SIDE TO ME, SIDE I BET NO ONE TOLD YOU ABOUT--

I HAVE A *SON.*

SAMMY, NINE YEARS OLD.

"I STOLE THAT MONEY TO BUY SAMMY A FUTURE. I OWE HIM.

"BOY'S MOTHER ABANDONED HIM.

"I AIN'T AROUND FOR 'IM.

"CRIME WAS MY OPTION."

AIN'T CUT AND DRY LIKE YOU WANT IT TO BE.

I'M A *BAD* GUY, TRUE, BUT I *LOVE* MY BOY.

AND KINGPIN GONNA *KILL* MY SAMMY IF I DON'T RETURN HIS MONEY.

GIVE ME HIS INFORMATION.

WE'LL GET YOUR SON INTO PROTECTIVE RELOCATION SERVICES.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES?!

"THIS IS THE KINGPIN.

"HE'LL FIND SAMMY NO MATTER WHAT.

"ANYTHING I TELL YOU, KINGPIN *WILL* FIND OUT.

"LET ME GIVE KINGPIN HIS MONEY AND I'LL TURN MYSELF IN--*ON MY BOY'S LIFE.*"

AIN'T YOU EVER SUNK DOWN *LOW?*

NEEDED A SECOND *CHANCE?*

FINE. FORGET IT. DO ME AT LEAST *ONE* SMALL FAVOR?

IN MY BELONGINGS THERE'S A LETTER THAT I WROTE TO SAMMY.

YOU FIND HIM, MAKE SURE HE GETS THE LETTER?

JUST WANT HIM TO KNOW HIS OLD MAN LOVES HIM BEFORE THE GANGSTERS KILL 'IM.

AGENT, WE'VE GOT A TRANSFER COMING UP, NEED YOUR SIGNATURE.

AVENGERS SENT YOU AS LEAD ON THIS HAUL SO YOU'RE ON THE HOOK.

YEAH. I'M THE ONE WHO CAUGHT HIM.

OKAY...LISTEN, I JUST NEEDED TO GET YOU IN PRIVATE--*WE'VE GOT A SITUATION.*

NEWS FROM HQ. THE KINGPIN PUT OUT A *TEN MILLION DOLLAR* MARKER ON THE FLY.

THINK I KNOW WHY.

WOULDN'T WORRY. WE'RE *RANDOMIZING* OUR ROUTE TO THE RAFT.

NO ONE CAN FIND US.

A BAD GUY FINDING US ISN'T MY CONCERN, AGENT.

ONE OF *OUR BOYS* HAS *ALREADY* PICKED UP THE MARKER.

ONE OF THOSE MANDROIDS IS GOING TO *KILL* OUR PRISONER.

WE NEED TO GET THEM LOCKED IN THE SECOND CELL. *NOW.*

FIGURE OUT WHO'S GUILTY LATER.

WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM.

I JUST GOT WORD FROM HQ--AGENT DALRYMPLE HERE ACCEPTED A BRIBE TO ASSASSINATE OUR PRISONER.

SERIOUSLY?

THE SOURCE SAYS HE'S RIGGED THE FLY'S HOLDING CELL TO BLOW.

WE GOTTA MOVE HIM.

YOU TWO WAIT IN THE SECOND CELL.

I'LL BRING FLY TO YOU TO SECURE.

YES, SIR.

YOU SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOIN'?

KEEPING YOU SAFE.

YOU BRINGING *HIM* HERE--

DON'T EXACTLY FILL ME WITH CONFIDENCE.

SIR-- GAAKK--

HI.

I'M NOT AGENT DALRYMPLE.

I'M THE HOBGOBLIN.

SHRUKK

GRAGHH--

NO NEED TO TRY AND CALL FOR HELP, I'VE SCRAMBLED ALL OUTGOING SIGNALS.

LET ME OUTTA HERE! *LET ME OUT!*

MY EMPLOYER WOULD LIKE TO OFFER YOU A CONTRACT, MR. VENOM.

FIRST HELP ME KILL THE HUMAN FLY...

...AND THEN HELP KILL *CRIME-MASTER* AND *JACK O' LANTERN.*

WE KNOW YOU'VE BEEN HUNTING LEADS ON THEM.

WIPING OUT THREE PSYCHOS MUST SOUND APPEALING TO SOME PART OF YOU.

MY EMPLOYER WILL PAY YOU TEN MILLION IN CASH FOR THIS HELP.

YOUR EMPLOYER IS A FAT PIECE OF--

EAS-SY. HE'S LISTENING IN. ALWAYS LISTENING.

THINK FOR A SECOND.

TEN MILLION BUYS YOU ANYTHING YOU WANT--SERVANTS, A BEACH HOUSE, A CHALET IN THE MOUNTAINS, A NAKED LADY PARTY YACHT-- *HAPPINESS.*

YOU'RE ALREADY PLANNING ON KILLING CRIME-MASTER.

SEEN YOU SKULKING ABOUT HIS BASE LOOKING FOR A CLEAR SHOT.

SO, WHY NOT GET RICH TO BOOT?

TEN MILLION. YEAH. OKAY.

IT'S A DEAL.

YOU CAN'T TRUST THESE PEOPLE!

MY EMPLOYER PAYS HIS DEBTS, YOU'LL *SOON* SEE, MR. DEACON.

FINE--SURE! *GO RIGHT AHEAD!* MAYBE YOU CAN HELP THEM KILL MY SON, TOO.

DOES IT MAKE YOU MAD, DEACON?

DOES IT MAKE YOU MAD ENOUGH TO *SPIT?*

WHAT? WHAT KIND OF A...OH, I *GET* IT.

MAD ENOUGH TO--

GLOOORFF

YERAGHH!

HURTS. GOOD TRICK.

FFSSHHH

GOT A FEW UP MY OWN SLEEVE.

GOOOOOOM

OKAY. YOU'VE FLUSHED AWAY ALL THE GOOD OPTIONS, VENOM.

AND EVERYBODY THINKS IT'S THE *VILLAINS* WHO ARE...

...CRAZY.

SCREEEHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

ARAGHH!

HIGH-PITCHED, HUH?

SYMBIOTE IS *NOT* A FAN. FIRE EITHER, RIGHT?

GHRAGH--

CONDUCTOR'S NOT ANSWERING AND SOMEONE'S JAMMED THE DOORS!

GET ME A CHARGE, WE'LL HAVE TO BLOW IT OPEN.

O-OPEN?! YOU CAN'T EXPECT US TO GO RUNNING INTO THERE?!

NO WAY. THE MAN DON'T PAY ME ENOUGH.

SCREEEHAHAHAHAHH

HOW DOES IT FEEL?!

THWIPP

ABOUT TO FEEL A BIT BETTER--

KWAAHHOOOOM

HERACLITUS OF EPHESUS TAUGHT THAT THE UNIVERSE WAS MADE OF *FIRE*.

LOOK AT YOU, GOING FERAL SO SOON AND FOR NO REASON.

LET ME GIVE YOU A REASON.

GHRAGH!

SHWUNK

"IT'S JUST A QUICK RUN, ROOKIE.

"YOU'LL BE BACK IN TIME FOR THE KNICKS/NETS GAME."

GONNA PUNCH HAWKEYE IN HIS UGLY, ARROW-LAUNCHING NOSE WHEN I GET BACK.

KRRRSHH

LEFT ARM IS SHOT--

--PAIN IS ENOUGH TO PUT ME TO SLEEP.

THWIPP

BROKEN BONE MAKES A BAD SOUND--

THWIPP

KRESH

WHOA--

--BUT IT HOLDS.

LONG GONE.

LOSING MY PRISONER.

"BULLET, WE NEED CONFIRMATION OF ROUTE CHANGE."

YOU'VE OVERSHOT YOUR ROUTE TO THE RAFT.

BULLET? PLEASE RESPOND.

THAT'S A GOOD SIGN. BOTH OUTTA MY WAY.

BOOGIE TIME.

FFSHHHH

OKAY. THIS IS WHAT GOOD LUCK FEELS LIKE?

THIS PARTY'S IN YOUR HONOR--

LEAVING IN THE MIDDLE?

HOOF--

TWOKK

BAD FORM.

SHRKOOOOM

HOLY--!

MY WINGS ARE FULL OF DEATH POISON!

GHAA--

SSHRUUUDD

MY BELLY FULL OF-- GLORFF

YERAGHAGH!

FFFSSHHHHH

YOU LISTENIN', KINGPIN?

CHOMP

ARAGHAHH!

I'M EATIN' YOUR ASSASSIN.

YOU HEAR ME CHEWIN'?!

NEXT I'M COMIN' FOR YO--

GHRAGH!

SHNK

TELL ME WHERE OUR MONEY IS--I'LL KILL YOU QUICK.

QUICKISH, ANYWAY.

YOU DON'T SCARE ME.

I TAKE YOU--NO QUESTIONS--I *TAKE YOU DOWN.*

BOTH OF YOU! HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!

RIGHT NOW!

TIME-OUT THE FIGHT FOR JUST ONE SECOND HERE, DEACON?

COPS. ALWAYS WITH THE WARNINGS.

BRAAOOOM

WHERE WERE WE?

HUH--?

GRRRRR

THWOOP

YOU'LL HAVE TO KILL ME TO STOP ME.

I'LL DIE BEFORE I SEE THAT PIG HURT MY BOY.

HELP! PLEASE--

PLEASE HELP ME!

THERE YA GO.

KILL ME OR GRAB THE GUARD.

LET ME SAVE MY BOY.

I'LL TURN MYSELF IN ONCE I DO.

I WILL.

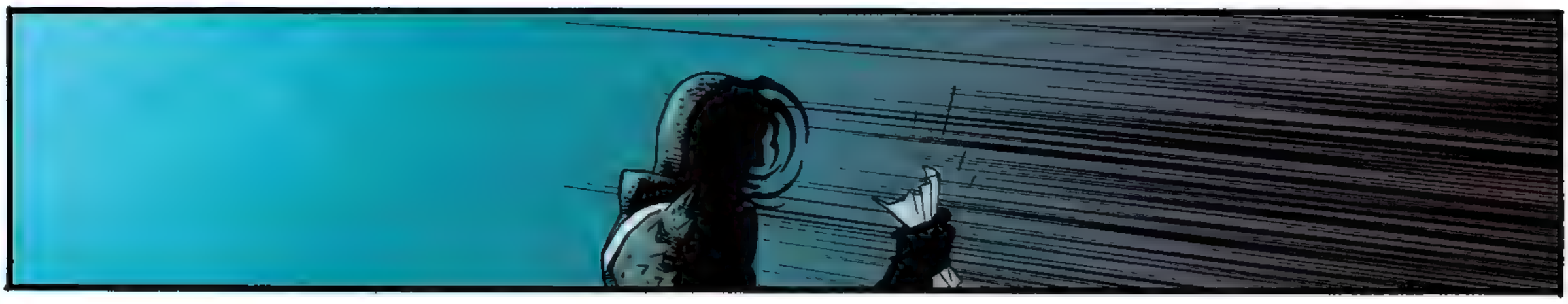
T-THANK YOU--

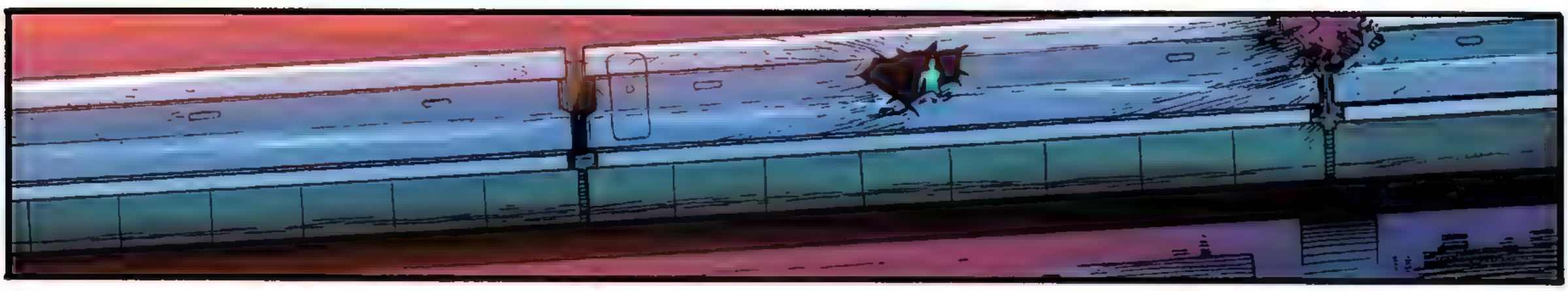
YES, THANK YOU.

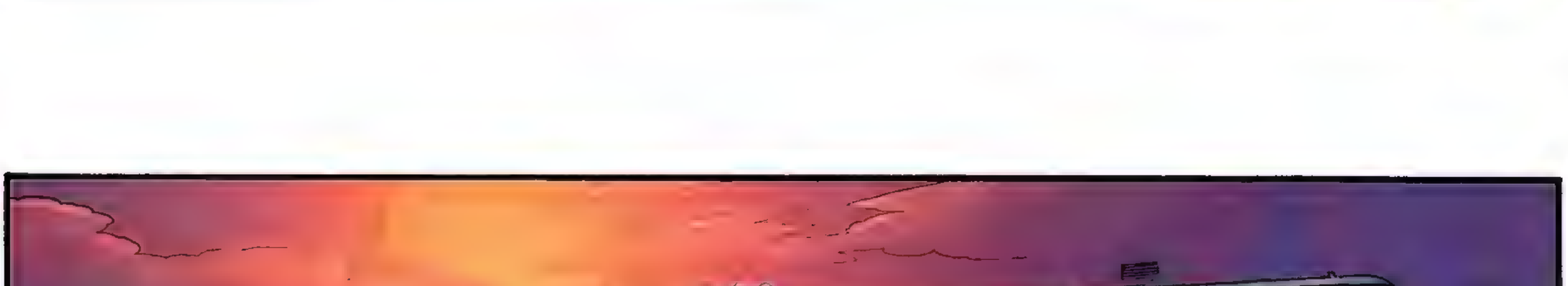
PLEASE STILL DELIVER THE LETTER TO MY SON, IN CASE I DON'T MAKE IT.

TRUST ME...

"...YOU'LL FIND IT ILLUMINATING."







Next:

THE SAVAGE SIX!

VENOM #17
"SAVAGE SIX: PROLOGUE"

OPTIONS.

LIFETIME OF CHOICES.

EVERY ONE A PIECE OF THE PUZZLE THAT DEFINES CHARACTER.

LARGE OR SMALL THEY SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON THE TRUTH ABOUT ME.

RUN AWAY FROM HOME OR TAKE THE BEATINGS.

DATE THE CHEERLEADER PARTY GIRL OR THE PROM QUEEN.

STUFF PETER IN A LOCKER OR GIVE HIM A SWIRLIE.

BE A VICTIM AND GIVE UP--

--OR PUSH THROUGH THE UGLY.

GIVE SOMETHING BACK.

STAY WITH BETTY.

OR BREAK CLEAN AND SPARE HER SOME HEARTACHE DOWN THE LINE.

BETTY.

I USED TO HAVE OPTIONS.

BUT ALL THAT'S *CHANGED.*

FIGHT AS HARD AS I CAN.

BUT THERE'S ALWAYS A TRAIL OF WRECKAGE BEHIND ME.

AND NOW... NOW I'M AN AVENGER.

THIS COULD END THAT.

THIS COULD COST ME *EVERYTHING.*

PYM

BUT NO OTHER OPTION SOLVES THE PROBLEM.

ONE HARD RESOLUTION.

THEN, AFTER THIS, FROM HERE ON OUT, I'M THE GOOD GUY...

...AFTER THIS ONE LAST HIT.

PYM HERE.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, FLASH?

THE SUIT... THE...UH... SYMBIOTE.

I NEED IT.

EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT DOWN THERE?

COPS ARE CHASING A LOCAL THUG.

I THOUGHT I'D LEND A HAND IN ENDING IT PEACEFULLY.

SUIT'S ON THE WAY.

THOMPSON... YOU SURE YOU DON'T NEED ANY HELP WITH THIS?

NO...

"...I CAN HANDLE THIS *ON MY OWN.*"

I'M SURE DR. PYM OR MAYBE EVEN BEAST WOULD HAVE LOTS TO TELL ME ABOUT BOTH MY OWN EVOLUTION AND DEVOLUTION.

SCARED KID TO BULLY...

...BULLY TO SOLDIER...

...SOLDIER TO DRUNK...

...DRUNK TO HERO...

...HERO TO *KILLER.*

"CRIME-MASTER.

"HE'S HERE, SIR."

DON'T JUST STAND THERE.

SEND THAT GLORIOUS FIEND IN.

CAUGHT A WHIFF ON HIS WAY IN, DADDY-O-- *STI-NKY.*

YEAH, SORRY 'BOUT THAT. AIN'T HAD TIME TO BATHE SINCE THE LAST VAGRANT I ATE.

WE WOULD EXPECT NO LESS OF THE *HUMAN FLY.*

I'M SO VERY GLAD YOU DECIDED TO JOIN US. HAVE A SEAT.

A SEAT? *HA!* NO. I HEARD ABOUT YOU. A REAL NUT. A KOOK.

PROBABLY GOT A PIT FILLED WITH SHARKS OR SOMETHING UNDER THE RUG.

GONNA JUST KEEP ABUZZIN' IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU.

PARANOID LIKE A DRUG ADDICT.

THE PIT'S FILLED WITH IRRADIATED BROWN RECLUSE SPIDERS, BY THE WAY.

AND SPEAKING OF RUGS, I'D APPRECIATE IF YOU AVOID DROOLING ON IT. IT'S GENUINE BABY SEAL.

WHERE ARE MY MANNERS?

LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MY FRIENDS.

I BELIEVE YOU ALREADY KNOW *MEGATAK* AND *DEATH ADDER* FROM YOUR TIME WITH THE HOOD'S CREW.

AND MY RIGHT-HAND MAN, *JACK*.

JUST *YOU* CALL ME JACK, BOSS MAN.

HE CAN USE THE WHOLE *O'LANTERN*.

RIIIIIGHT.

SO.

GOOD.

NICE TIMES. GOOD MEETINGS.

WHAT *DO* YOU WANT?

MUST BE NICE TO BE *WANTED*.

WANTED BY THE AUTHORITIES. *WANTED* BY THE KINGPIN.

BUSY LITTLE FLY.

A MAN WHO MIGHT *WANT* SOME FRIENDS.

SO THIS IS A FRIEND PARTY? HUG-BATHS, RAINBOW PONIES, BUTTERSCOTCH WATERFALLS?

CUT THE GIBBERISH, KOOK.

FINE. CUTTING.

NOW, I'M A *BUSINESSMAN*, MR. DEACON, AND I RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF A LITTLE *QUID PRO QUO*.

I'VE BEEN WORKING ON A NEW PROJECT, AND I'M CERTAIN I'LL NEED *SPECIALISTS*...SUCH AS YOURSELF...ON MY TEAM.

MOMENT OF TRUTH.

STRETCHES ON FOREVER.

YOU WORK FOR ME...

PULSE RACING.

...AND I OFFER YOU UNPARALLELED *PROTECTION*.

GET CONTROL-- *BREATHE*.

I'M A SOLDIER.

SOLDIERS KILL.

CRIME-MASTER KNOWS WHO I AM--GOT ME DEAD TO RIGHTS.

GOT ME CORNERED.

BACK UP AGAINST IT.

HE'LL BLACKMAIL ME-- *USE ME*.

NEXT TIME I SAY NO--

HE'LL KILL MY FAMILY-- MY FRIENDS.

BETTY.

MOM.

JESSIE.

PETER.

I PUT THEM IN HIS CROSSHAIRS.

UNLESS I KILL HIM FIRST.

A TOAST TO OUR PUTRID NEW FRIEND.

WELCOME TO THE SAVAGE SIX!

"PUTRID?"

TAKE OUT JACK-O-LANTERN, TOO.

ALL THESE KILLERS--WORLD IS BETTER OFF WITH THEM DEAD--

I'M BETTER OFF.

NO OTHER WAY TO BE SURE.

OTHER WAYS. CALL THE AVENGERS.

BUT CRIME-MASTER'D TELL THEM THE TRUTH. TELL THEM ABOUT ME...

NO. HE'D KEEP COMING BACK--HE'D FINISH OUR BUSINESS.

ONLY ONE WAY.

THINK OF BETTY. SHE DESERVES A QUIET LIFE.

TAKE A BREATH.

END THIS RIGHT--

HHN!

ZEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

B-BLAM! BLAM!

GET DOWN!

PNNG!

SNKG!

BROCK!

LOOK AT YOU. BLOODTHIRSTY KILLER.

JUST LIKE I TOLD YOU, RIGHT?

THAT SYMBIOTE *MUST* BE *ANNIHILATED!*

THE WORLD MUST BE CLEANSED OF ITS BLIGHT.

BLAM!

BLAM!

SONIC BULLETS--

SCEEEEEEE

SCEEEEEEE

PYM'S MEDICINE IS KEEPING THE SYMBIOTE DOCILE-- BUT IT REACTS.

ARRGH!

SITUATION DETERIORATING--

--OUT OF CONTROL--

--MOVE-- CLEAN IT UP.

THWIPP

IF YOU LET HIM GET AWAY--

--HE'LL NEVER STOP UNTIL--

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOU, BROCK!

THWIPP!

GAA-- YOU CAN'T STOP ME, BOY. I'M THE HAND OF GOD!

I'LL KILL YOU BO--

TWONG!

EDDIE'S DOWN.

END THIS NOW--

--HAIL MARY SHOT--

BLAP BLAP BLAP BLAP BLAP BLAP

PNG

SNKK

SKNG

PNGK

PLKK

YOU FACE THE POWER OF ACTUALIZED PROGRAMMING.

THE BINARY LANGUAGE OF THE COSMOS COLLECTED, MADE REAL.

REAL LIFE TETRIS...

SOME SORT OF *SHIELD*--HAVE TO GET CLOSER--

NEVER GET ANOTHER CHANCE.

GO--

--SNAP HIS DAMNED NECK--

--KILL THEM ALL.

WHEN YOU TOLD ME YOU'D HIRED A *LIVING COMPUTER PROGRAM*, I THOUGHT YOU'D BEEN EATING MY *BLOTTER BUTTER-SCOTCHES*, BUT THAT STUPID-LOOKING NUT'S PRETTY HANDY.

GOOD.

SHUT UP.

FLY!!!

KILL WHATEVER STUPID *SON OF A BITCH* IS SHOOTING AT ME AND YOU'LL HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE YOU CAN GOBBLE!

GO-- *EARN YOUR MEAT!*

FINE.

BUT NO MORE STINK JOKES.

EUGENE! BUDDY! I KNEW IT!

I KNEW YOU JUST COULDN'T LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE!

YOU KNOW WHAT I GOTTA DO TO BETTY NOW, RIGHT?

YOU PIECE OF--

DOOOOM

BLAM BLAM BLAM

WE WUV MURDER!

WE PWARTY IN BWUDD!

WE EAT BWAINS-- GAA!

LOOK WHO IT IS!

THE CHUMP WHO BROKE ME OUTTA JAIL TO SAVE A SON I AIN'T GOT!™

LAST ISSUE... --SOME INTERN.

SO FAST--

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE--

YEEAAAGH!

THWIPP

DID THIS-- BROKE *TRUCE*... R-RED IS A... IT'S NOW A BIRD.

IT'S HERE NOW... NO...THAT'S NONSENSE...

POISON. FREAK'S CLAWS ARE *POISONED.*

GORK

WE WERE GONNA LEAVE YOU ALONE, EUGENE.

WE *REALLY* WERE. *YOU* BROKE THE TRUCE.

SHRDD

--DON'T LISTEN--

FOCUS... THERE IS NO BIRD...

DIZZY.

DON'T THINK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FAIL--

RHAA--!

WELL, *HELLO*, MR. THOMPSON.

OOF--!

THWUDD

Y-YOU WANT TO KILL ME-- *DO IT.*

JUST YOU...YOU AND ME...LEAVE EVERYONE ELSE OUT.

LITTLE LATE TO REOPEN NEGOTIATIONS, DON'T YOU THINK, SPORT?

BUT I'M NOTHING IF NOT *REASONABLE.*

MAYBE I'LL ONLY KILL YOUR *MOM* IN QUEENS.

KEEP TALKING.

KEEP RUNNING YOUR DAMNED MOUTH--

SO I CAN PUT A BULLET IN IT--

H.A.M.M.E.R.

HNNF!

FUMBLED THE BALL.

GRINDING SOUND IN MY CHEST.

--LUNGS WON'T TAKE AIR--

I THINK BETTY IS NEXT, EUGENE.

DIE KNOWING I WILL SOON DEFILE HER CORPSE.

GO ON, MEGATAK--

KILL HIM.

THOK

--NO WIN--

GET CLEAR--

--GET MY BEARINGS--

THUD

IF I DIE HE'LL KILL THEM--

GET OUT OF HERE.

PROTECT THEM.

"WELL, HE'S GONE."

UP AN' SLIPPED AWAY, BOSS. TWO GUESSES WHERE HE WENT.

WE LUV TO BWIND HIS EYES.

BUT MAN, YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT HE *FORGOT.*

OH, EUGENE. YOU JUST EXCRETE BAD LUCK.

GOOD NEWS-- TONIGHT'S NOT A TOTAL BUST AFTER ALL.

CUT HIM DOWN.

DEATH ADDER, WOULD YOU BE A DEAR AND PREPARE LAB NUMBER 5?

FUN-FUN-FUN.

WAKEY, WAKEY, BROCK.

W-WHERE?

W-WHAT IS T-THIS?

RELAX, EDWARD. AIN'T THAT KIND O' PARTY.

YOU KNOW, WHEN I FIRST ENCOUNTERED OUR MUTUAL FRIEND, AGENT VENOM, I SAW RIGHT THOUGH HIS SUPER HEROICS.

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT I SAW?

I SAW *PROFIT.*

I IMMEDIATELY SET OUT TO FIND AND MONETIZE ONE OF THESE ALIEN SYMBIOTES.

AFTER ALL...CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS...TERROR CELLS...MILITARY CONTRACTORS... WILL ALL *PAY* THROUGH THE NOSE FOR SUCH A WEAPON.

OF COURSE, THANKS TO YOUR GENOCIDAL CRUSADE, PICKINGS HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT *SLIM.*

HGGGGGGGG

BUT OUR SEARCH HAS NOT BEEN WITHOUT RESULTS.

AND NOW THAT WE HAVE OUR SYMBIOTE, WE ONLY NEED ONE THING.

BIOHAZARD

A HOST...

N-NO!

NEEEEAAAAGGHH!

PLEASE, GOD!

NOT AGAIN!

NOT--

RRRAAAAA!

SO, EDDIE... HOW DO YOU FEEL?

WHAT WOULD YOU AND YOUR NEW FRIEND MOST LIKE TO DO?

KILL--

--VENOM!

KEV + TERRY

VENOM #18
"SAVAGE SIX PART 1: PUBLIC ENEMIES"

NO SIGN OF A STRUGGLE.

THEY HAVEN'T BEEN HERE.

BUT NEITHER HAS BETTY.

C'MON--PICK UP--

PLEASE, GOD--

HEY! THIS IS BETTY. LEAVE A MESSAGE AT THE BEEP.

PICK UP THE DAMNED PHONE!

FIND HER.

BEFORE THEY DO.

BEFORE THEY KILL HER.

HEY! THIS IS BETTY. LEAVE A--

UNLESS THEY'VE ALREADY FOUND HER.

DAMMIT!

UNLESS SHE'S ALREADY DEAD.

BECAUSE OF ME. BECAUSE OF--

SMACK!

COFFEE WITH PETER EMPIRE JAVA 7:00 AM

EMPIRE JAVA

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO, PETE?

IT'S FLASH. *AGAIN.*

HE'S CALLED A DOZEN TIMES THIS MORNING.

WHEN WE WERE TOGETHER, I'D BE LUCKY TO GET A CALL.

APPARENTLY IF I WANTED HIM TO STAY IN TOUCH, ALL I HAD TO DO WAS BREAK THINGS OFF.

URMMM

MAYBE IF YOU TWO SAT DOWN AND...UGH. *NEVER MIND.*

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS ANYONE I'M THE LAST PERSON WHO SHOULD BE GIVING ROMANTIC ADVICE, BETTY.

HONESTY, FROM THE MOUTH OF A MAN? SHOCKING STUFF THERE, PARKER.

OKAY, BUT, DON'T LET THIS MAKE YOU BITTER.

YEAH, I KNOW. IT'S JUST--I'M SO *DAMNED* TIRED OF BEING *LIED TO* BY THE MEN IN MY LIFE.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT ME THAT ATTRACTS THESE *LOSERS?*

DON'T DO THAT.

NONE OF THIS IS *YOUR* FAULT.

FAULT OR NOT--IT'S *TRUE.*

MY OWN BROTHER, BENNETT, GOT HIMSELF KILLED BECAUSE OF GAMBLING DEBTS.

NED AND I DIDN'T GET ALONG DURING THE GOOD TIMES... AND THE GOOD TIMES DIDN'T LAST LONG.

AND FLASH...

GOD ONLY KNOWS *WHAT* FLASH IS INVOLVED WITH.

HAS HE...

HAS FLASH OFFERED ANY KIND OF EXPLANATION?

VRMMM

NOT ONE THAT MAKES SENSE.

MAYBE I SHOULD JUST GO AHEAD AND ASK THE SON OF A--

MAYBE.

PROBABLY.

BUT YOU SHOULD *WAIT* UNTIL YOU'RE A LITTLE LESS ANGRY.

GOD, PETER.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL *EVER* STOP BEING ANGRY WITH HIM FOR THIS.

GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN.

FLASH HAS BEEN THROUGH A LOT LATELY.

I KNOW... AND I STILL DON'T HATE HIM ANY LESS.

I GUESS THAT'S HOW I KNOW IT'S *REALLY* OVER.

LOOK...I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF LEAVING YOU HERE BY YOURSELF, BUT--

I KNOW. IT'S A WORKDAY.

I NEED TO GET TO WORK ON MY NEW ARTICLE AS WELL.

THINK I MIGHT SIT HERE FOR A BIT, CAFFEINATE UP THE ENERGY.

THANKS FOR COMING, PETE.

YOU NEED ANYTHING--YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

WILL DO.

URMMM

Flash
hompson

NOT NOW, FLASH.

NOT NOW.

I'LL HAVE A SMALL AMERICANA, PLEASE.

30¢

50¢

$1.00

THAT'LL BE $4.25, MA'AM.

THANKS, JUST A SECOND...

TELL YOU WHAT, MISS BRANT--

THIS ONE'S ON *ME.*

OH!

UM...

THANK YOU...?

JACK.

PEOPLE TEND TO REMEMBER ME BY MY *FACE.*

YOU'RE FLASH'S FRIEND... FROM...

THAT'S RIGHT. ARMY BUDDIES.*

THESE DAYS, HE'S MY *SPONSOR.*

HOW'VE YOU BEEN?

IT'S KIND OF YOU TO ASK.

BIT OF A *ROUGH PATCH* RECENTLY.

BENDER IN VEGAS. *HURT* SOME PEOPLE.

Y'KNOW... LET THEM DOWN.

I COULD HAVE USED A FEW ENCOURAGING WORDS FROM FLASH, Y'KNOW, BUT HE'S BEEN A LITTLE HARD TO TRACK DOWN.

TELL ME ABOUT IT.

*BETTY MET "JACK" IN VENOM #10--TOM

ACTUALLY, I WONDER IF WE MIGHT GO SOMEWHERE A LITTLE MORE *PRIVATE*...TO TALK.

IT'S ABOUT FLASH.

I'M NOT SURE I'M--

IT'S *IMPORTANT*, BETTY.

OW!

YOU'RE *HURTING*--

DEAR GOD--

HE'S ALREADY FOUND HER.

SUPERSMASH!!!

WELL, POOPS.

HE TOUCHED HER.

OH, NO! IT'S THE TERRIBLE SUPER VILLAIN VENOM!

V-VENOM?

PUT HIS HANDS ON BETTY--

THIS WOMAN'S LIFE IS IN DANGER!

KREESH

LAST MISTAKE OF YOUR LIFE, YOU ROTTEN PIECE OF--

UHGH!

LEAVE HIM ALONE!

TWOK

BETTY'S VOICE-- SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.

AFRAID OF ME.

THINKS I'M A KILLER.

SHE'S RIGHT

SURE AS HELL GONNA KILL--

I SAID--

GET OFF HIM!

REEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

AAAGGH!

SONIC PEPPER SPRAY.

SHE'S BEEN EXPECTING TO ENCOUNTER VENOM AGAIN--

SOMEONE GAVE HER THIS TO DEFEND HERSELF--

--AGAINST ME.

THING'S GOT PARKER'S SCIENCE GEEK FINGERPRINTS ALL OVER IT

AHH!

PLEASE-- NO--!

GET OUT OF HERE!

RUN!

LETTING HER GO--A MISTAKE.

CRIME-MASTER WILL SEND THE OTHERS.

SHE'LL GET KILLED BY HERSELF.

GO--

PROTECT HER.

--SNAP HIS NECK FIRST.

YOUR GIRLFRIEND TRIED TO SAVE MY LIFE. SHE'S *SWEET* ON ME.

GONNA GIVE HER A *DEEP* KISS WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER.

PLENTY O' *TONGUE.*

HOW'D YOU FIND HER?!

KWOKK

GOT NEW FRIENDS NOW, EUGENE.

OUR OPERATION'S EXPANDING.

TWAHH

MEET MEGATAK.

UNNGH!

LOOKS LIKE A VIDEO GAME FROM THE '80S COME TO LIFE, RIGHT?

IT'S BECAUSE HE *IS*. HE'S A LIVING BOSS-LEVEL BADDIE.

KOOK'S GOT A REAL AFFINITY FOR ELECTRONICS.

COMPUTERS... VIDEO GAMES... *CELL PHONES.*

JACK'S HAVING FUN.

COCKY.

NOW... WHERE WERE WE?

OH, YEAH... MEGATAK'S GOING TO GO FIND BETTY AND--

HNNF!

THWIPP

THINKS IT'S A DONE DEAL.

THINKS HE CAN AFFORD TO TOY WITH ME.

WHICH MEANS HE WAS READY FOR ALL OF THIS.

PREMEDITATED.

SMACK

GET OUT OF HERE--FIND BETTY.

DON'T LEAVE HER SIDE.

CAN'T DO THIS ALONE.

THE AVENGERS. MAKE THE CALL--

SEEK AND SMASH

OOF!

GHA--!

MEGATAK...JAMMED SIGNAL...

TURNING EVERY CELL PHONE INTO A LAND MINE.

WHUMPP

PSYCHOPATH IS TOYING WITH ME...

TOYING WITH BETTY...

...ALREADY A DOZEN STEPS AHEAD.

EXCUSE ME-- LOOK OUT-- PLEASE--

MOVE!

OH, GOD--

LET GO OF ME!

OKAY--NOW TO FIND JESSE AND MOM--

PRAY TO GOD I'M IN TIME.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?! PUT ME DOWN!

STOP!

STOP STRUGGLING!

I'M TRYING TO HELP YOU!

HELP? YOU TRIED TO BLOW ME UP! YOU JUST WANT TO SHUT ME UP!

MAKE SURE I STOP WRITING ABOUT THE CRIME IN THIS CITY--HEY! WHAT ARE YOU--

HER PHONE--

GET RID OF IT.

WHAT THE HELL--?!

KEEP MOVING.

GET TO MOM-- JESSE--

GET THEM TO SAFETY--

THEN CRIME-MASTER DIES.

TW!PP

THEY ALL DIE.

LET ME GO!

SHUT UP!

STOP FIGHTING ME!

STOP FIGHTING OR I'LL--

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF

I'M SORRY--YOU JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME.

I KNOW THAT'S CRAZY. I KNOW.

JUST TRUST ME.

CALM DOWN.

GET IT TOGETHER, DAMMIT.

YOU'RE SCARING HER.

YOU'RE NOT THINKING STRAIGHT

STARTING TO SOUND LIKE--

VENOM!

AIEEEE-!

TENDRILS-- RAZOR SHARP--

TWIST HARD-- BREAK HER FREE--

AAAAAAHHH!!

NO!

TOO FAST--

--DIDN'T EXPECT--

RELAX YOUR BODY!

SHE DOES.

SHE'S A TROUPER.

FIGHTS HER FEAR.

STRONGEST WOMAN I'VE EVER KNOWN.

SHE'S HAD TO BE.

ENDLESS TRIALS, ENDLESS MISFORTUNE...

...THE THING I SWORE I'D NEVER BE TO HER.

WHATEVER THAT WAS--IT'LL BE HERE SOON--

RUN!

ALL OF YOU! GET THE HELL OUT OF--

WE'VE COME FOR YOU, GRANDFATHER--

WE'VE COME FOR YOUR SOUL.

THE TOXIN SYMBIOTE--

BONDED TO SOMEONE NEW--

KROOOM

--SOMEONE WITH A GRUDGE.

TSCHÖKK

ACK!

NOT JUST SOMEONE--

YOU BETRAYED US!

TRIED TO BUTCHER US!

BUT WE ARE WHOLE AGAIN--

THAT VOICE... EDDIE.

EDDIE BROCK.

READY FOR YOU.

SKLAM

WHAT? WHERE ARE YOUR TEETH, GRANDFATHER? I SMELL THE DRUGS IN YOU...

YOU LET HIM NEUTER YOU

EDDIE... WAIT...

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU...MY FAULT... BUT...

YOU... THIS ISN'T YOU ANYMORE...

YOU'RE RIGHT.

IT'S US.

AND WE WILL BE THE ONLY ONE LEFT FOR THE SPAWNING.

DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS--

BUT I DON'T HAVE TIME TO DEAL WITH IT NOW.

YEEAAARRRGGH!

REEEEEEEE

THE SONIC CHARGE IS SPENT.

EDDIE... TOXIN...STILL WEAK...

PUT A BULLET IN HIS HEAD.

PUT AN END TO THIS DELUSIONAL PSYCHO.

N-NO...

NOT HIS FAULT.

IT'S MINE.

WRAP HIM UP.

THWIP

GET BETTY. GET OUT OF HERE--

TOXIN WANTS TO HURT *ME*... *MY* FAMILY...

...NOT THESE PEOPLE.

THIS WON'T HOLD HIM LONG!

GET OUT OF HERE--CALL 911, TELL THEM WHAT YOU SAW!

GOD HELP ME IF I'M WRONG.

THE...THE WOMAN I WAS WITH...

WHERE DID SHE GO?

T-THAT WAY, MISTER.

THANK YOU, SON.

NOW, YOU MOVE ALONG--

"...IT'S NOT SAFE HERE."

LEAVE ME ALONE... PLEASE...

JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.

BETTY?

NEED HER TO *TRUST* ME.

NO CHOICES LEFT. GONE TOO FAR.

SHE'LL NEVER STOP FIGHTING ME.

NO OTHER OPTION IF WE WANT TO *SURVIVE*.

YOU CAN COME OUT, BETTY.

I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU.

NO MORE THAN I ALREADY HAVE.

F-FLASH...?

VENOM #19
"SAVAGE SIX PART 2: FAMILY"

MADE THE ONLY PLAY I COULD.

NO TIME TO SECOND-GUESS MYSELF NOW.

BETTY'S AFRAID...AFRAID OF *VENOM*.

I NEED HER TO TRUST ME.

F-FLASH?

NOW THAT SHE KNOWS WHO I AM, MAYBE SHE'LL *UNDERSTAND*--

SMACK

YOU BASTARD!

BETTY, I--

ALL THIS TIME, YOU'VE BEEN LEADING THIS...

THIS... DOUBLE LIFE.

THIS LIE.

I'M SORRY, BETTY.

BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME RIGHT NOW.

YOU'RE IN DANGER--

BECAUSE OF ME.

--AND IF YOU DON'T STAY WITH ME, THOSE PEOPLE... THEY'RE GOING TO KILL YOU.

NO...

BETTY... THEY'RE GOING AFTER MY MOM... MY SISTER...

I'VE GOT TO STOP THEM.

DAMN YOU, FLASH THOMPSON.

JESSIE'S PLACE IS CLOSER.

BUT I NEED TO CALL MY MOM. WARN HER.

THEY HACKED OUR PHONES.

TRYING TO CUT US OFF.

HEY!

THWIP

I... I DON'T REMEMBER HER NUMBER--

I KNOW IT.

D-RIING
D-RING

HMMM?

D-RING

I WONDER WHO *THAT* COULD BE?

D-RING

PLEASE...

TELL YOU WHAT, MOMMY DEAREST...

WHY DON'T WE JUST LET THAT GO STRAIGHT TO VOICEMAIL?

YOU AND ME ARE GONNA BE PLENTY *BUSY.*

D-RIIIIING

SHE'S NOT ANSWERING.

MAYBE SHE'S OUT.

GOD, I HOPE.

CAN YOU TRY JESSE?

I'LL HAVE TO USE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE.

MAYBE--

ESCAPE IS IMPOSSIBLE.

YOUR SCENT LINGERS ON THE DATA STRINGS.

MEGATAK! DAMN! TOSS IT!

THEY MUST BE MONITORING THE LINES.

FLASH...

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

THE ONLY THING WE CAN DO--

--SURVIVE.

THAT'S IT. LIE TO HER.

KEEP HER CALM.

THIS IS JESSE'S APARTMENT. I NEED YOU TO STAY OUT HERE. LET ME CHECK IT OUT.

YOU HEAR ANYTHING, YOU RUN. DOWN THE FIRE ESCAPE.

CRIME-MASTER'S REALLY NAILED ME TO A WALL HERE.

I CAN'T EVEN REACH OUT TO THE AVENGERS.

IF THIS IS THE END FOR ME-- FINE.

FLASH...

BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET THEM TAKE MY FAMILY.

STAY. HERE.

OKAY... OKAY.

...THANK YOU.

PLEASE.

JESSIE DOESN'T DESERVE TO ANSWER FOR WHAT I'VE DONE.

PLEASE, GOD...

NO...

THUMP

JESSIE'S HUSBAND.

JACK O'LANTERN MUST'VE COME STRAIGHT HERE WHILE I WAS DEALING WITH TOXIN...

WHILE I WAS WITH BETTY...

THE LANTERN MADE SHORT WORK OF HIM.

HEAD SPINNING.

MY FAULT.

IF I HAD COME HERE FIRST...

W-WHO'S THERE?

JESSIE...

WHO IS THAT?

SHE'S ALIVE!

I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT SHE MANAGED TO--

N-NO.

SHE *COULDN'T* HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH THIS *UNSCATHED*.

JACK WOULD'VE DONE *SOMETHING* TO HER.

DON'T WANT TO SEE THIS.

FLASH? IS THAT YOU?

HOW DID SHE--

HIYA, FLASH!

YOUR SISTER SURE LIKED TO PLAY WOUGH!

WE WUV TO SWAWWOW HER SOUL!

WE WUV TO CARVE OUT WUVER-BOY'S BWAINS!

JESSE'S VOICE.

JACK'S LITTLE DEVIL DOLLS.

MIMICKING MY SISTER'S VOICE.

MESSING WITH MY HEAD.

PLAYING GAMES WITH ME.

I'M DONE PLAYING GAMES!

SMASH

NO FAIR! NO FFFF--

SSCCCRRRREEEE!

CR-CHOCK

YOU'RE NOT PLAYING VEWY NICELY.

WE BWEAK YOUR SISTER'S BOY TOY AND YOU BWEAK US!

WE'RE TAKING OUR TOYS AND GOING HOME!

AND YOU CAN GO STRAIGHT TO *HELL!*

BEEP

BETTY!

BEEP

BOOOOM

FLASH...

WHERE'S JESSE?

THEY GOT TO HER.

MY GUESS IS SHE'S--

SMOKE TRAIL.

JACK O'LANTERN. HE RETURNED TO WATCH THE SHOW.

HE'S NOT GOING TO GET AWAY.

WAIT HERE.

CAN'T TAKE CHANCES WITH THIS SONOFABITCH.

KILL SHOT.

NO HESITATION THIS TIME.

AS SOON AS I GET HIM IN MY SIGHTS...

JESSIE!

SHE'S ALIVE!

THERE'S STILL A CHANCE...

BOO!

YEEAAGGHH!

LOOK AT US, EUGENE.

BOTH OF US HAVE *HOT DATES*... AND WE LEAVE THEM ON ROOFTOPS SO WE CAN *DANCE* WITH EACH OTHER.

THIS MUST BE *TRUE LOVE*, HUH?

BUT DON'T WORRY.

ONCE I'M DONE WITH YOU, I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF 'EM.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT A LITTLE GIRL-GIRL-HOMICIDAL MANIAC ACTION *ALWAYS* CHEERS ME UP.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO ME, JACK DOESN'T WALK AWAY FROM THIS.

HE'LL NEVER TOUCH MY SISTER...

NEVER TOUCH BETTY...

BLAM BLAM BLAM

HRRRK!

BLAM

OH, EUGENE. YOU'RE ALL FIRED UP, AREN'T YOU?

WE CAN'T LET GIRLS COME BETWEEN US LIKE THIS.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BROS BEFORE--

SHUT UP!

BLAM BLAM

FWOOOOSH

AIN'T OVER 'TIL *DADDY* SAYS IT'S OVER.

YEEAGH!

HRRR... HHRR...

BUT YOUR SISTER, ON THE OTHER HAND.

OH, HER GOOSE IS OFFICIALLY COOKED.

UNNNF!

CAN BARELY SEE...

EYES BURNING...

DOESN'T MATTER...

HAVE TO SAVE--

I REMEMBER THIS STORY ABOUT HOW OL' WEB-HEAD COULDN'T SAVE SOME PRETTY GIRL FROM A TERRIBLE FALL.

IF THE REAL DEAL *COULDN'T* SAVE SOME SKIRT...

...HOW COULD YOU?

JESSIE!

JESS?

JESSIE?!

I... OH...

BRAVO, AGENT VENOM. BRAVO. YOU SAVED THE GIRL!

BUT I WONDER IF YOU CAN MANAGE A *REPEAT PERFORMANCE.*

HELP!

FLASH!

FLAAAAAAAASH--

CAN'T LEAVE JESSIE.

OOOOH. TOUGH BREAK, HUH?

I'VE GOTTA BE GOING NOW.

BULLET HOLES TO PATCH. GIRLS TO *SLAUGHTER.*

JUST ONE LAST QUESTION BEFORE I GO.

"HAVE YOU VISITED MOM RECENTLY?"

VENOM #20
"SAVAGE SIX PART 3: THE TRUTH"

Queens.

IT'S A TRAP.

JACK WOULDN'T KILL MOM OR BETTY.

NOT LIKE THIS.

NO--HE'D WANT ME TO WATCH.

SENDING ME HERE--PART OF SOME GAME.

JUST A TRAP--PART OF A BIGGER PLAN.

WHY ELSE GRAB BETTY? WHY NOT KILL HER?

I WAS RIGHT THERE.

AND JESSE--JESSE WAS A DISTRACTION. BETTY WAS THE PRIZE.

MENTIONED MOM TO THROW ME OFF THE SCENT--

SIDETRACK ME.

HE WOULDN'T KILL HER.

ONE OF THE OTHERS WOULD.

HUMAN FLY. DEATH ADDER.

THEY'D KILL YOUR MOTHER.

WOULD NOT THINK TWICE.

AND IF THEY DID--IF YOU FIND HER DEAD--

IT'S ALL ON YOU.

GONE.

BUT THEY'RE *BOTH* GONE. MOM MAY BE ALIVE.

STILL PLAYING THE GAME.

THANK *GOD*.

ACIDIC VOMIT.

THE HUMAN FLY.

KILL HIM. KILL THAT SON OF A--

YERAGH--!

SPRAAT!

DEATH ADDER, LEFT HIM HERE--

LEFT HIM TO TAKE HIS SHOT--

GOOD.

SOMEONE TO PAY FOR THIS.

DAMMIT-- POISON IN THOSE CLAWS--

ALREADY COURSING... THROUGH... BANANA TIME.

LIKE THE OLDIES.

SHOULD'VE PAID THE ELECTRIC BILL.

CIRCUS WON'T BE BACK IN TIME...

ATTENTION!

PAY... ATTENTION!

POISON-- WORKS FAST.

DIZZY--

--LIGHTS LIKE THE CIRCUS--

FIGHTING BLIND--NO AIM--

NEVER HIT HIM WITH *ONE* OF THESE--

SO HIT HIM WITH A *DOZEN.*

SWING 'EM *FAST*-- BLIND--

--EVERY DIRECTION--

WHEN THEY *STOP*--MEANS THEY'VE *STUCK*.

--BASTARD'S STILL SILENT-- DOESN'T MAKE A SOUND--

BUT I CAN FEEL HIM SCREAMING--

SHASH!

--AND HE'S JUST *BEGUN*.

TWICK

HKK!

CHOKING ME.

SYMBIOTE INSTINCTIVELY THICKENS AROUND THE NECK.

ITS INSTINCT? OR *MINE*?

WHAT *THE HELL* IS GOING ON IN HERE?

DIDN'T I ALREADY TELL YOU ABOUT THE *DAMNED* NOISE--

OH... GOD!

CALL 9-1-1! CALL 9-1-1!

HOLY--

POISON-- HE'S ALL TRACERS AND BLUR--

FASTER THAN I CAN TRACK. NO WAY TO LOCK IN--

SKRAK

GHRA--!

GET YOUR HEAD TOGETHER-- FIGURE IT OUT--

YOU DIE HERE--SO DOES MOM.

SO DOES BETTY.

HEART POUNDING--

--POISON SPREADS--

OH--OH, GOD--!

--SO MANY SOUNDS--

FLY'S ACID PUKE-- STINKS--

THE CIRCUS IS ALWAYS HERE--

ALWAYS FUN--NEVER SAD--

STINKS--

WAKE UP!

YHERAGHH!

FSSHSSSSHHSSSSHH

NO--OH, NO--

NO!

THWIP!

MONSTERS.

THEY TEAR DOWN THE WORLD--

SPAWN

--HURT PEOPLE--

--SPREAD HORROR--

NO REASON TO LIVE--

HURRICH

NO REASON TO SUFFER HIM--

PLEASE... DON'T HURT US.

DON'T WORRY, LADY.

HE WON'T.

DESERVES TO DIE--

PULL ON THE SPINE--

ONE HARD JOLT.

DO IT--

HE WON'T STOP UNTIL SOMEONE IS *DEAD*.

OH MY--!

GO! GET OUT OF HERE!

SHE CAN'T SEE THIS--

GET OUT!

--SHOULDN'T SEE WHAT COMES NEXT--

KR-KRAK!

NO CHOICE.

NOT PRETTY--

WHAT DID YOU DO?

WAAAAAAAA--!

BUT SHE'S ALIVE...

...AND HE ISN'T.

IN HERE! THEY'RE IN *HERE!*

CRAZY-- KILLING EACH OTHER!

YOU...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR DEAL IS--

--BUT JUST GO--

JUST GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE--!

MOM....

IF THE FLY HAS HER--

--THEN I'VE GOT A GOOD IDEA WHERE.

The Abandoned Shipyard.
STATEN ISLAND.
H-HELLO?
HELLO?
ANYONE?
CAN ANYONE TELL ME WHERE THE HELL I AM?
THIS IS HOW I DIE, ISN'T IT?
I'M *DEAD* ALREADY.
NOT QUITE, MS. BRANT. ALTHOUGH THAT IS MOST CERTAINLY A **POSSIBILITY.**

YOUR BEHAVIOR IN THE NEXT FEW MINUTES WILL GUIDE THE HAND OF FATE, SO TO SPEAK.

JUST--STOP THE SNIVELING--DO AS YOU'RE TOLD.

W-WHO ARE YOU?

WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?

THE NAME'S CRIME-MASTER.

AS FOR WHAT I WANT... OR MORE SPECIFICALLY WHAT I WANT WITH YOU, BETTY...

...WHY DON'T YOU COME AND ASK ME FACE-TO-FACE.

BZZZ-

CLIK!

LITTLE MEET 'N' GREET.

YOU'LL BE SURPRISED BY HOW MUCH WE HAVE IN COMMON.

I...I DON'T HAVE *ANYTHING* TO SAY TO *YOU*.

SO TOUGH.

BUT I CAN TELL YOU'RE SWEATING THROUGH YOUR POLYESTER.

AND I ASSURE YOU...

...IF I CLOSE THAT DOOR, IT WILL NOT OPEN AGAIN.

EVER.

Lower East Side.

YEEARRGGHH

N-NO...NO PLEASE...

C'MON, MAN... PLEASE?

SKK-GLL-SKKK!

YEEEEEEADAAAAGGRRRRHHHH!

I WANT TO GO HOME.

P-PLEASE. I DON'T WANT TO SEE THIS.

I WANT TO GO *HOME*.

YEEEEEEADAAAAGGRRRRHHHH!

WHERE IS SHE?

THE HUMAN FLY. CREATURE OF HABIT.

ALWAYS BRINGS HIS VICTIMS TO THE SAME PLACE.

GOT HERE BEFORE HE STARTED.

DOESN'T MAKE ME LESS FURIOUS.

GET THE MOM TO SAFETY.

BUT FIRST THINGS FIRST.

LOOK AT WHAT HE'S DONE TO ME!

LOOK AT WHAT *YOUR* BOY--

YOU SPEAK TO HER AGAIN AND WE'LL SEE HOW WELL YOU FLY WITH ONE WING AND NO EYES.

HEY, WE CAN *DEAL*, ALL RIGHT?

I'LL TELL YOU *EVERYTHING* YOU WANT TO KNOW.

YOU WANNA KNOW WHERE CRIME-MASTER'S AT? *I'LL TELL YOU.*

CLOSE YOUR EYES, MA'AM.

WAIT... WHAT... I SAID I'LL TALK!

I'LL TALK!

I KNOW.

YEEEEEADDAAAAGGRRRRRHHHH!

SHK-GGLK

WHAT HAVE YOU... DONE?

DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WANTED TO TALK?

SO--

--TALK.

...

MS. BRANT.

THIS WAY, IF YOU WILL.

THE BOSS'LL BE WITH YOU SHORTLY.

OH, GOD.

W-WHAT IS *THIS?*

THAT'S ME AND MY--

QUITE A LITTLE *SHRINE*, ISN'T IT?

CRIME-MASTER?

AN ODE TO BENNET AND HIS LITTLE SIS, *BETTY BRANT.*

TO THE *FAMILY.*

A FAMILY THAT WAS STRIPPED AWAY FROM ME.

BUT DON'T FEEL TOO BADLY--

--CRIME IS MY FAMILY NOW.

BENNETT?

BUT... YOU...

I'M RIGHT HERE.

AND I'M OFFERING YOU A CHANCE.

A CHANCE FOR US TO BE *TOGETHER* AGAIN.

AND FOR OUR FIRST *FAMILY* NIGHT?

WE'RE GONNA NUKE SOME TV DINNERS...

...AND YOU'RE GONNA WATCH ME *MURDER THE HELL* OUT OF *FLASH THOMPSON.*

VENOM #21
"SAVAGE SIX PART 4: BEST LAID PLANS..."

The Abandoned Shipyard.
STATEN ISLAND.

"I KNOW YOU HAVE *QUESTIONS*, SIS. WHO WOULDN'T? THESE ARE INTERESTING TIMES.

"AND I'M EAGER AS PLUM PUDDING TO GIVE YOU SOME *ANSWERS*.

YOU THINK HE'S GONNA SHOW UP?

WHAT AM I, ONE OF THEM MAGIC EIGHT BALLS?

"BUT I NEED YOU TO *UNDERSTAND* SOMETHING.

"THE ANSWERS ALL LEAD TO THE SAME PLACE.

UH... HEY...

WHAT'S WITH THE *SILENCER?* WHAT, YOU FIGURE YOU MIGHT NEED TO DO THIS WORK QUIET LIKE?

"THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY THIS IS ALL GONNA END.

SIGNS POINT TO "YES."

HEY! WAI--

PUM! PUM! PUM! PUM!

"THIS ENDS *BLOODY.*

"SO...NOW THAT WE'VE GOT THAT OUT OF THE WAY..."

LET'S HAVE ONE OF THOSE BROTHER AND SISTER HEART-TO-HEARTS I HEAR SO MUCH ABOUT ON THE LIFETIME CHANNEL.

I DON'T... I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

YOU WERE SHOT DOWN.

Y-YOU *DIED*, BENNETT?!

IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #11.

YEAH.

THAT WAS A REAL BAD TIME IN MY LIFE, A REAL LOW POINT.

AHH!

THAT BULLET RIPPING ME UP STUNG *ALMOST* AS BAD AS KNOWING MY SISTER THOUGHT I WAS NOTHING BUT A LOW-LIFE, GUTTER-TRASH GAMBLER!

I MISSED THE FUNERAL BUT I'VE GOT TO KNOW... DID YOU MANAGE TO SQUIRT OUT A FEW TEARS FOR YOUR DEAR, DEPARTED BROTHER?

BENNETT... I...

IT'S ALL RIGHT. REALLY, IT IS.

I CAN'T BLAME YOU FOR THINKING I WOULDN'T AMOUNT TO MUCH.

BUT I'VE *CHANGED*. IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME THAT YOU KNOW THAT.

I'VE *BETTERED* MYSELF.

"I'M PART OF SOMETHING *BIGGER* NOW.

"YOU MIGHT SAY I HAD A MOMENT OF CLARITY.

"OF COURSE, SAID EPIPHANY CAME TO ME WHILE I WAS LYING IN A SECRET MORGUE.

"I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I WAS THERE. I STILL DON'T KNOW *HOW* THEY BROUGHT ME BACK.

"BUT THEY SAVED ME.

"THEY *CHOSE* ME...

"CHOSE ME TO FULFILL A *GREAT DESTINY*...TO CARRY ON A NOBLE TRADITION.

"A CRIME-MASTER FOR *EVERY* GENERATION."

AND NOW LOOK AT ME.

LOOK HOW FAR I'VE COME.

I SHOULD HAVE COME TO YOU BEFORE NOW, BETTY. I REALIZE THAT.

BUT I HAD MY TRAINING... AND I HAD MY WORK...

I NEVER STOPPED THINKING OF YOU, THOUGH. I NEVER STOPPED *YEARNING* FOR THE DAY WE COULD BE REUNITED.

EVEN WHILE WATCHING THAT PATHETIC CRIPPLE FLASH THOMPSON TRY TO TAKE MY PLACE WITH YOU, I--

SIR! HE'S HERE!

SORRY, SIS. WE'LL HAVE TO CATCH UP LATER.

JACKIE BOY, IT'S *GAME TIME.*

CRIME-MASTER'S IN HERE SOMEWHERE...

WAITING FOR ME...

UREET! UREET! UREET!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

SURRENDER YOURSELF TO THE FURY OF NEW REALITY!

THERE IS NO ESCAPING-- HUMANITY IS COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY NEW REALITY!

WAITING FOR ME TO *FINISH* WHAT I STARTED.

THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS IS FINDING *BETTY*.

WHAP!

MEGATAK'S DIGITAL MASS MADE PHYSICAL-- HE'S *UNSTOPPABLE.*

THOOM!

WHHFF!

hhh

HITS HARDER THAN THE HULK.

AND HE'S EVERYWHERE.

NEED ROOM. GET CLEAR-- NEED TO--

NNNGHH!

FLESH IS WEAK. FLESH IS AFRAID.

BUT THE CODE IS CLEAN. THE CODE IS MERCIFUL.

THE CODE IS--

NO. NO MERCY.

IT'S NOT YOUR *RIGHT* TO OFFER HIM SUCH KINDNESS.

HE'S MINE!

HRRRRKKK!

0111000111100101

CHOMP!

TOXIN.

WILLING TO RISK HIS HUMAN HOST TO GET TO ME--TO MY SYMBIOTE.

HIS HOST, EDDIE BROCK--*ALMOST* AN INNOCENT.

BONDED WITH TOXIN AGAINST HIS WILL--

NNNNF!

--AFTER FAILING TO KILL ME.

STRONGER THAN ME--

THERE'S NO RUNNING, GRANDFATHER.

FED BY THE RAGE.

IS THAT THE **STINK** OF **YOUR** FEAR I SMELL? OR IS IT THE HUMAN WHO'S PUT YOU ON A LEASH?

CAN'T WIN THIS.

DEAL WITH HIM LATER.

BETTY IS IN DANGER.

PUT HIM DOWN--OUT OF THE WAY--

IT'S ENOUGH FOR NOW.

SO. WEAK. RESORTING TO TRICKERY.

WHERE'S THE BEAST THAT TRIED TO SLAUGHTER ME?

GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO KILL.

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!

COME TO ME! FEED YOUR PROGENY!

GIVE ME YOUR STRENGTH FOR THE SPAWNING!

GRRAAAA!

WHAT'S THIS?
ANOTHER TRICK?
IT'S CALLED A DECOY, ASSHAT.
DISTRACTED HIM FOR A FEW SECONDS.
ALL I NEED.
REEEAAAAAARRRGGH!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
BUT BROCK DIDN'T *WANT* TO BECOME TOXIN.
WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM IS MY FAULT.
GRRGGGHHGRG
AND...IF I'M RIGHT...
BROCK AND THE SYMBIOTE HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO COMPLETELY BOND.
STILL A CHANCE TO SAVE THE MAN BEFORE I KILL THE MONSTER.
C'MON... C'MON...
SLLLUUUUUKK!
YES! THOMPSON GETS THE TOUCHDOWN.
V-VENOM?
YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, BROCK.
YOU'RE GONNA BE--

EDDIE!

HH--
HHR--
NOOO!

YOU BASTARD!

FLAMES BURNING TOO HOT. CAN'T GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO HELP.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?!

YEEEAAGGGGH!

DEAR GOD-- BROCK--

DIDN'T DESERVE THAT.

BUT THE FIRE...TOO STRONG, MY SYMBIOTE WOULD NEVER GET THROUGH

ONLY ONE THING MATTERS NOW--

BETTY.

BENNETT... I'LL DO WHATEVER *YOU* WANT.

BUT...JUST LEAVE FLASH ALONE...DON'T HURT HIM.

PLEASE... BENNETT...

AH AH AH!

IT'S *CRIME-MASTER* WHEN THE MASK IS ON.

AND DO YOU REALLY THINK I'M THAT FOOLISH?

DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN CONVINCE ME THAT YOU'RE READY TO BECOME MY DOTING SISTER, THE *CRIME-MISTRESS?*

YOU'D BETRAY ME AT YOUR FIRST POSSIBLE CHANCE.

WE'VE GOTTA LET THAT STOCKHOLM SYNDROME SETTLE IN A BIT FIRST.

BESIDES... EVEN IF I *WANTED* TO LET VENOM LIVE...

EVEN IF HE HADN'T HURT YOU SO TERRIBLY...

...EVEN IF HE HADN'T RUINED SO MANY OF MY PLANS...

...WHAT MAKES YOU THINK HE'D EXTEND ME THE SAME COURTESY?

HE--

NO, BETTY. HE'S *RIGHT.*

HE'S GOING TO *DIE.*

EUGENE... I GOTTA DROP SOME TRUTH ON YOU--

I'M *BORED* OF OUR LITTLE RIVA--

LURRRK!

THAT'S GOOD, JACK.

FWUMP!

KR-RANG!

THIS IS BETWEEN ME AND YOUR BOSS.

URR... URRR...

I'M...I'M SLIPPING HERE...

SOMEBODY HELP ME!

DADDY! HELP--

-ME EEEE

POISON'S NOT GOING TO DO MUCH AGAINST--

FSSSSSSH!

RRRR

WEAK. SYMBIOTE DYING.

HE'S GOT ME. DEAD TO RIGHTS.

BETTY... PLEASE...

IT'S OVER.

NOW... NOW THAT SYMBIOTE OF YOURS ISN'T OFFERING QUITE SO MUCH PROTECTION...

NOW WE'LL TRY POISON.

BLAM!

D-DAMN, BETTY.

THAT'S SOME COLD...

I WAS MEANT...FOR... SOMETHING SPECIAL...

Y-YOUR BROTHER?

HE'S DEAD, FLASH.

HE DIED A LONG TIME AGO.

BETTY'S SAFE.

MY MOM AND JESSE ARE SAFE.

THE NIGHTMARE'S OVER.

FOR NOW.

BETTY...

I HAD NO IDEA. IF I HAD--

IT WOULDN'T HAVE CHANGED ANYTHING.

HE WAS COMING FOR ME. LIKELY FOUND OUT ABOUT YOU BECAUSE OF ME. NO MATTER WHAT YOU DID...

BENNETT WOULD STILL BE DEAD.

YOU'D ALREADY MADE UP YOUR MIND. AND ONCE YOU SET YOUR MIND ON SOMETHING...

I LOVE YOU...BUT YOU'RE SELFISH.

I NEVER MEANT FOR THINGS TO TURN OUT THIS WAY.

I KNOW YOU DIDN'T, FLASH.

DESPITE WHAT YOU THINK, THIS *ISN'T* YOUR FAULT.

AT LEAST... NOT ALL OF IT.

AND FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, I *FORGIVE* YOU.

BUT I DON'T *EVER* WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

Avengers Lighthouse Station. Later.

AGENT VENOM.

NICE OF YOU TO JOIN US. WE'VE ONLY BEEN CALLING YOU FOR DAYS.

WHERE HAVE YOU--

I'VE HAD A BIG STUMBLE.

IT DIDN'T GO WELL.

TRUTH IS, I'VE BEEN SCREWING UP SINCE I GOT THIS SYMBIOTE.

AND I THINK IT'S TIME I CAME CLEAN.

VENOM #22
"FATHER'S DAY"

THE NORMAL FAMILY.

FUZZY FEELINGS AND SUNNY MEMORIES.

SOME MARKETING GENIUS DECODED OUR CORE IDEAL AND PLAYED IT ON REPEAT FOR THE PAST SIXTY YEARS.

THERE ISN'T A PLACE IN THAT FANTASY FOR LEADING KILLERS TO YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW.

LEADING MONSTERS TO YOUR MOTHER.

MOM IS MAKING COOKIES IN A SUN-DRENCHED KITCHEN.

DAD COMES HOME FROM WORK IN TIME TO PLAY CATCH AND HEAR ABOUT YOUR DAY.

YOUR SIBLINGS BICKER, BUT IN THE END YOU'RE ALL THERE FOR EACH OTHER.

FINAL DAILY BUGLE

INSIDE:

JACK-O'-LANTERN KILLER STRIKES AGAIN

A PAINTING THAT MAKES A *NORMAL* FAMILY LOOK *DYSFUNCTIONAL*.

BUT IN THE CASE OF THE *TRULY* BROKEN--

IT ONLY SERVES TO MAKE THE MEMORIES THAT MUCH *WORSE* BY CONTRAST.

GROWING UP SURROUNDED BY THAT RAGE, IT WAS NORMAL TO ME.

JUST HOW PEOPLE BEHAVED.

HOW A MAN BEHAVES.

TAUGHT ME JUST HOW HIGH THE ANGER BAR CAN GO.

AND IT GOES.

AND I BIT EVERYONE AROUND ME WITH THOSE TEETH HE GAVE ME.

AND EVEN AS I DID...

I COULD SEE IT.

INSIDE THE *PUNCTURE WOUNDS* I LEAVE.

I SEE THAT SAME VENOM.
Office TEAPOT
Baby
Monday
ONE WAY
STARK TECH
1701
23

FATHER'S DAY

THIRD HEADLINE THIS WEEK.

MING DELI GROCERY DELI

Elmo's Pizza

THEY WERE JUST WORKING ON THE WRONG NIGHT WHEN THE WRONG PERSON CAME BY.

JACK-O'-LANTERN MADE IT OUT OF CRIME-MASTER'S CHEMICAL PIT.

HE'S BEEN KILLING EVERY DAY SINCE.

LEAVING ME A TRAIL.

MING DELI

Elmo's Pizza

BELOW *TODAY'S* HEADLINE THERE WAS AN ARTICLE ON HOW BEST TO SPEND *FATHER'S DAY.*

TODAY.

JACK-O'-LANTERN... BRAINWASHED INTO THINKING CRIME-MASTER WAS HIS *DAD*.

MORE THAN BRAINWASHED, HE *GREW UP* UNDER THE MAN'S CARE.

ESCALATING THINGS ON *FATHER'S DAY*--

NO COINCIDENCE.

FIRST ONE SINCE THE OLD MAN *DIED*.

DIDN'T EVEN CONSIDER WHAT IT WOULD FEEL LIKE.

SO BUSY PROTECTING MY FAMILY FROM THE *NIGHTMARE* I BROUGHT TO THEM.

JACK O'-LANTERN IS STILL OUT THERE.

NOT FOR LONG.

KILLING DOESN'T BEGIN TO DESCRIBE WHAT I'M GOING TO DO TO HIM.

...THEM'S THE BREAKS, SNAPPY!

OH, YOU DIDN'T JUST GO THERE!

HAHA HAHA

THE HELL'S GOTTEN INTO YOU, SONNY BOY?

I MADE A TRADE WITH DAVID DOWN THE STREET... AND...AND I'D WANTED TO UNMAKE THE TRADE AFTER WE MADE IT...

BUT HE WOULDN'T GIVE ME MY CARDS BACK...AND... AND...

CAN'T LET PEOPLE SCREW WITH YOU LIKE THIS.

YOU TAKE SOMETHING FROM MY BOY?

SO. YOU THINK YOU CAN PUSH MY KID AROUND?

THINK AGAIN.

THE HELL HAPPENED, DAVID?

M-MR. THOMPSON +SOB+ SCREAMED AT ME...TOOK MY FOOTBALL CARDS...

YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH IT, FOLET?

WANT TO ESCALATE THIS?!

COME ON THEN. I'M RIGHT HERE-- NOTHING ELSE TO DO!

WHAT I THOUGHT.

MY OLD MAN WOULD'VE NEVER DONE SOMETHING LIKE THAT FOR ME.

EVEN NOW, WITH THE DISTANCE I HAVE, WITH THE REALITY OF IT ALL OUT IN THE OPEN--

I STILL DEFEND HIM.

I STILL THINK, WELL, MAYBE I *DESERVED* IT.

MAYBE HE WAS RIGHT ABOUT ME.

MAYBE I'M NO GOOD.

I LET HIM *DOWN*.

NEVER DID *ENOUGH*.

NEVER MADE HIM *PROUD*.

I *DESERVED* IT.

ALL OF IT.

BUT THE TRUTH IS, HE WAS A *SOCIOPATH*.

HUMAN INTERACTION WAS JUST A DANCE FOR HIM.

A GAME HE PLAYED TO GET THINGS HE *WANTED*.

HE DIDN'T LOVE ME BECAUSE HE DIDN'T LOVE *ANYONE*.

BECAUSE HE WAS BROKEN DOWN THE *MIDDLE*.

YEAH, WELL, THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL *THE THOMPSON HAIL MARY PLAY.*

IT'S WHY I'M THE *QB*, LIZ. AND WHY I'M THE GUY *YOU* SHOULD GO TO PROM WITH--

KROOM!!

YOU GOT A SPEEDING TICKET AND DIDN'T TELL ME?

KEE OUT

YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD HIDE IT?

I WAS GOING TEN OVER THE LIMIT--IT ISN'T A BIG DEAL--

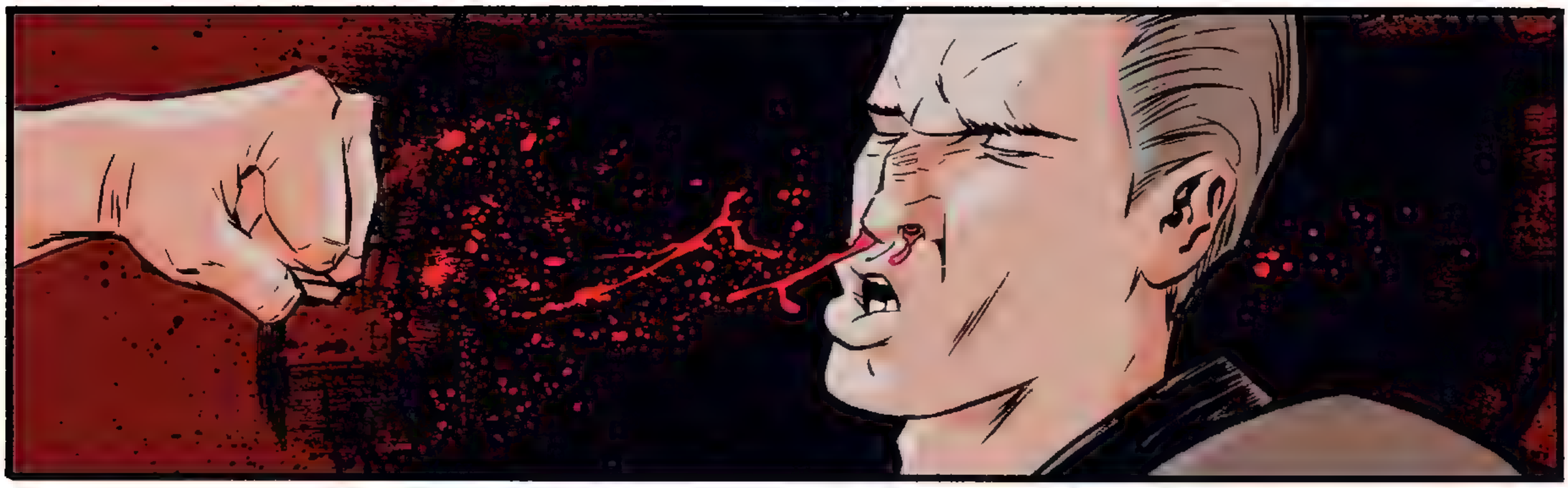
YOU KNOW WHAT THIS DOES TO MY INSURANCE RATES?

YOU KNOW HOW MUCH THIS WILL COST ME?!

GET OFF OF ME!

YOU WATCH THAT MOUTH OF YOURS, *SONNY BOY*, OR YOU'LL BE *ON THE STREET!*

IF YOU'RE GOING TO KICK ME OUT I'LL GIVE YOU A REAL *REASON* TO!



BUT IT'S LIKE THEY SAY...

...YOU ONLY REMEMBER THE BAD STUFF.

BAD STUFF THAT LEAVES AN IMPRESSION THAT CLOUDS THE MAJORITY OF NORMALCY.

HE WASN'T ALWAYS *BAD.*

HE WASN'T JUST THAT GUY WHO *LOST HIS MIND.*

BUT THE NORMAL DAYS IN-BETWEEN MADE THE REST ALL THE *WORSE.*

LULLED INTO A BELIEF HE'D CHANGED.

THAT LAST TIME WAS THE *LAST TIME.*

HE'D NEVER DO IT AGAIN.

HAVE A SEAT, SONNY BOY.

LET'S HAVE A TALK.

KLANGG

SPIDER-MAN

KEEP

WHY DO YOU LET HIM DO THIS?

WELL, NOW, EUGENE-- *YOU* PROVOKED *HIM*. YOU KNOW YOUR FATHER'S TEMPER.

HE'S CRAZY. HE'S CRAZY AND HE BEATS YOUR KIDS AND YOU DON'T DO *ANYTHING* ABOUT IT!

I AM *NOT* GOING TO SIT HERE AND LISTEN TO YOU *BADMOUTH* THE MAN I MARRIED. HE HAD A ROUGH CHILDHOOD.

YOU CAN TELL YOURSELF WHATEVER YOU WANT BUT I WAS THERE, EUGENE. IT WAS *YOUR* FAULT.

YOU JUST CAN'T TALK TO YOUR FATHER THAT WAY.

YOU KNOW, I REALLY NEVER DID LIKE YOU.

IT TOOK ALL MY STRENGTH TO SIT IN A ROOM WITH YOU FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR WITHOUT CRUSHING YOUR SKULL IN.

YOU SON OF A BITCH...

YOU ROTTEN SON OF A BITCH!

KRAKEN

BUT I'M BACK TO FINISH IT, SONNY BOY.

BACK TO KICK YOUR ASS ONE LAST TIME.

BLEEP

BLEEP

BLEEEEEEE—

WHAT ARE YOU SMILING ABOUT?

WE WON THE GAME!

I MADE THE WINNING PLAY.

FAKED 'EM *OUT*, RAN IT RIGHT *IN*.

OH. GOOD FOR YOU.

YOUR COUSIN GRADUATED MEDICAL SCHOOL THIS WEEK.

KID'S A DAMN GENIUS.

"YOU LET ME KNOW IF YOU DO SOMETHING IMPORTANT, WILL YOU?"

-KOFF- -KOFF-

WAS IT NICE GETTING TO SEE YOUR DAD, EUGENE?

I LOST MY DAD RECENTLY.

IT HURTS.

THIS IS GONNA HURT *WORSE.*

SHNKK

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU ABOUT THIS FILTHY ROOM, LITTLE PIGGIE!

FLAKK

STOP!

KRASH

SSHEDD

AT LEAST I KNEW MY DAD *LOVED* ME.

KNEW HE WAS *PROUD* OF ME.

ALL THE THINGS I MADE JESSE TELL ME ABOUT YOUR DAD.

REALLY ROUGH STUFF, EUGENE.

ALMOST MADE ME FEEL *SORRY* ENOUGH FOR YOU TO LEAVE ALL THIS *ARCH-ENEMY* BUSINESS ALONE.

IT'S INTERESTING; YOU MUST FEEL LIKE PEOPLE WILL CUT YOU A *BREAK* GIVEN WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH.

BUT YOU AN' ME, WE'RE LIKE *BROTHERS*.

I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T WANT ME TO *PITY* YOU.

I KNOW YOU WOULDN'T *WANT SPECIAL TREATMENT* BECAUSE OF WHO YOUR *DAD* WAS.

BLAM

BLAM

GHRAGHH!

SKRA

TROKK

I'M POISONED. YOU'RE RIGHT. THERE'S NO GETTING IT OUT.

THE WOUND IS SEALED SHUT.

THEIR HATRED WILL ALWAYS RUN THROUGH OUR VEINS, JACK.

BUT IF WE MAKE DIFFERENT CHOICES...

WHO KNOWS?

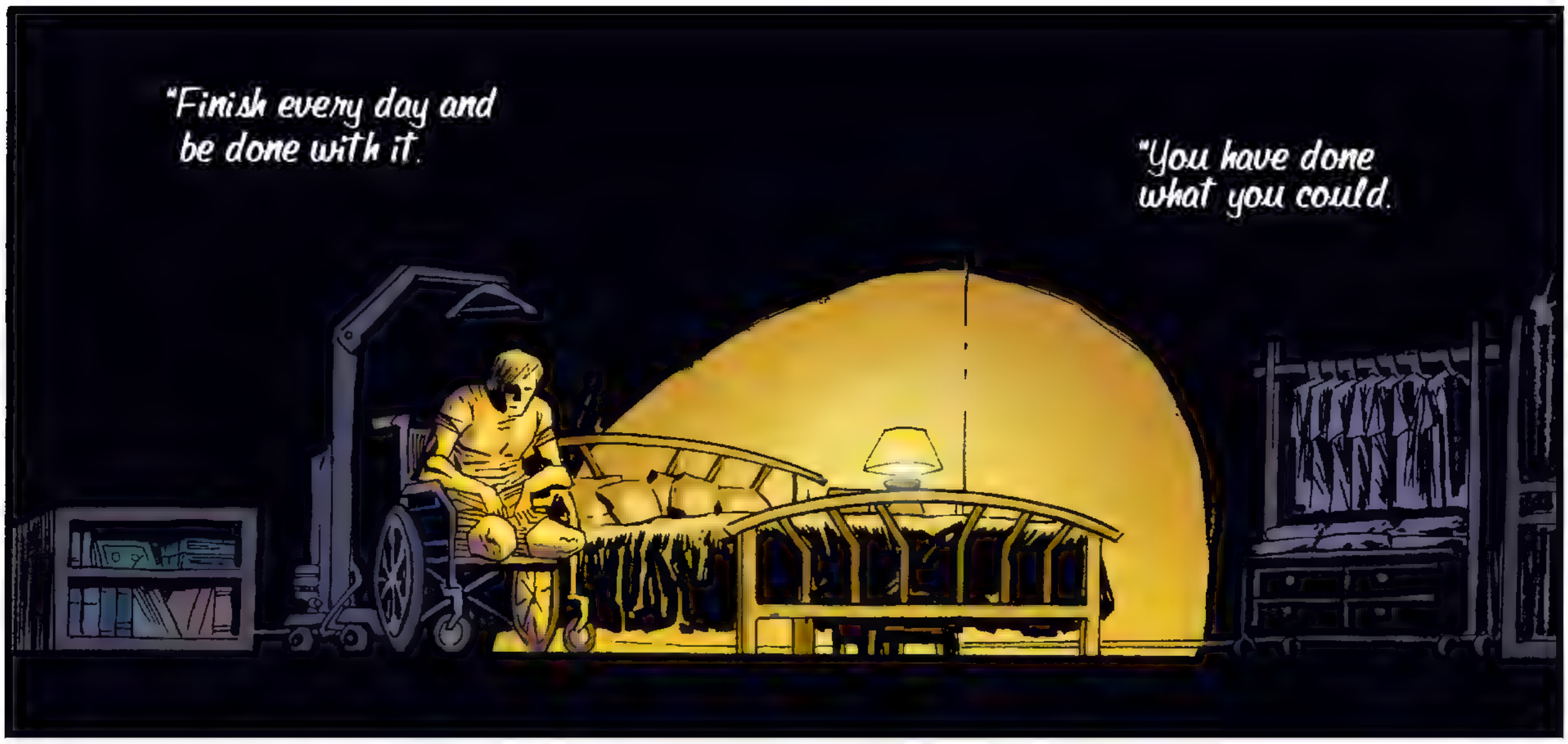
WHAT CELL NUMBER?

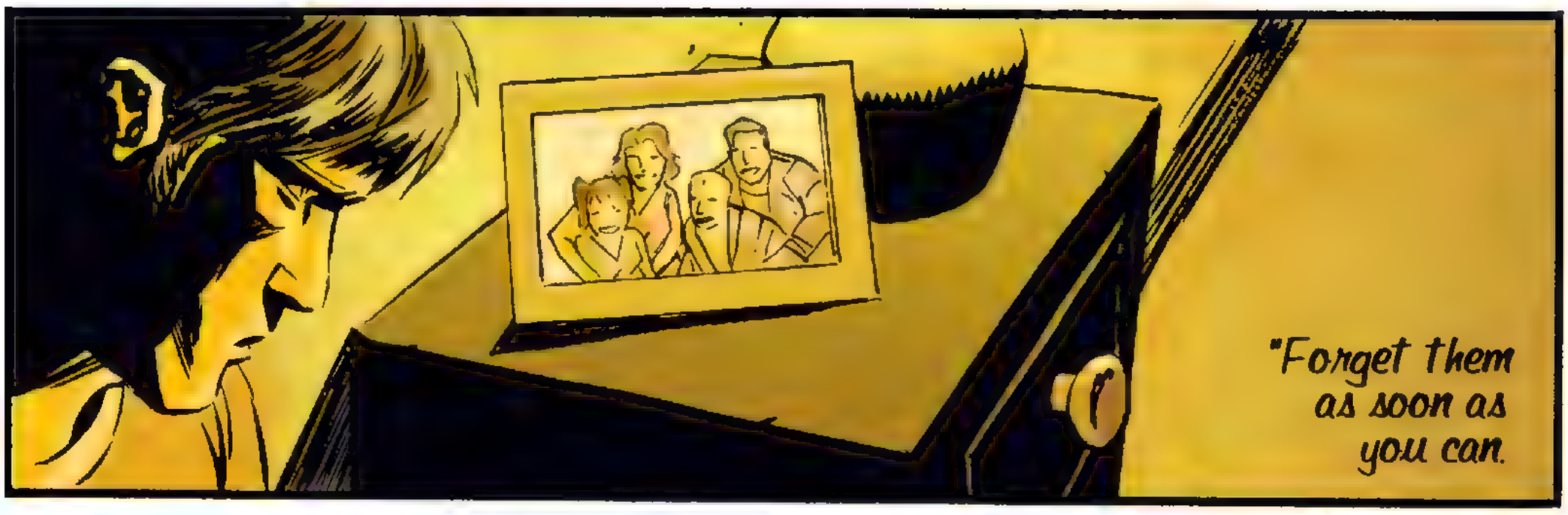
BLOCK D WITH THE REST OF THE THIRD-RATE NOBODIES.

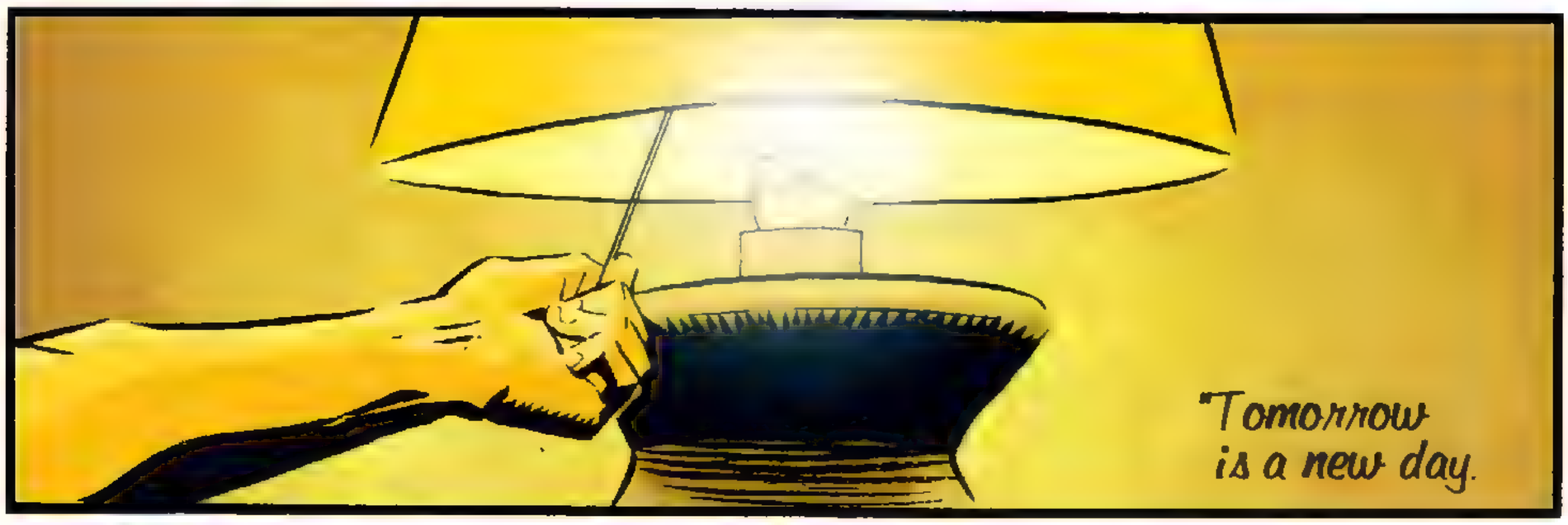
...IT GOT OUT OF HAND BUT THAT'S ALL OF IT.

IF YOU WANT TO CUT ME I GET IT. I OWN IT ALL...

"...I KNOW I MISMANAGED EVERYTHING."







"You shall begin it serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

VENOM #23
"MONSTERS OF EVIL PART 1"

YOU KNOW WHAT'S NOT AS GLAMOROUS AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE?

BEING A *SUPER HERO.*

ALONE IN AN ABANDONED PARKING GARAGE. LURKING IN THE SHADOWS.

NOT THE STUFF OF LEGEND.

BUT I *CHOSE* EVERY STEP I TOOK ALONG THIS PATH. AND EVERY STEP LED HERE.

BACK IN THE DAY, I WAS YOUR TYPICAL ALL-STAR HIGH SCHOOL JOCK. QUARTERBACK. POPULAR. NOT HALF BAD WITH THE LADIES.

AND I WAS STILL SO ANGRY THAT I SPENT EVERY FREE MOMENT *TORTURING* GUYS LIKE "PUNY" PETER PARKER.

BUT IT WASN'T ANGER, WAS IT?

IT WAS *FEAR.*

A FEAR OF BEING *POWERLESS.*

IT'S NO WONDER I LOOKED UP TO GUYS LIKE *SPIDER-MAN*.

GUYS LIKE HIM... HEROES...WERE *ALWAYS* IN CONTROL...

...*NEVER* SCARED.

IT WAS THAT ADMIRATION...THAT BORDERLINE HERO-WORSHIP...THAT SET ME ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW.

CORPORAL EUGENE "FLASH" THOMPSON.

IT WAS ME TRYING TO BE A HERO THAT COST ME MY LEGS.

BUT DESPITE MY INJURIES, I GOT MY SHOT AT THE BIG LEAGUES WHEN I WAS CHOSEN FOR *PROJECT: REBIRTH*.

SPORTING A "TAMED" *ALIEN SYMBIOTE* THAT RESTORED MY LEGS WHILE I WORE IT, I BECAME A KIND OF MILITARY-GRADE SPIDER-MAN.

AGENT VENOM.

I GAVE IT MY ALL.

EVEN MANAGED TO SAVE THE WORLD.

SUDDENLY, I WAS A *REAL* SUPER HERO...ENDORSED BY *CAPTAIN AMERICA* HIMSELF...

A MEMBER OF THE *SECRET AVENGERS*.

BUT I'M JUST A REGULAR GUY. THE PRESSURE... THE *RESPONSIBILITY*... NEARLY CRUSHED ME.

I MADE MISTAKES.

PUT MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN DANGER.

SECOND CHANCES ARE ONLY HALF AS COMMON AS *SQUANDERED* SECOND CHANCES.

I'M GONNA SOUND THIS OUT NICE AND SLOW, THOMPSON, AND I HOPE IT SINKS IN.

YOU'RE ON RECON DUTY ONLY. *DO NOT* ENGAGE THE ENEMY.

I DON'T INTEND TO BLOW THIS OPPORTUNITY... NOT AGAIN.

"WOW."

I'VE BEEN STANDING HERE FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES AND YOU HAVEN'T EVEN NOTICED.

WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE FOR A PEEK AT WHATEVER STORY'S PLAYING OUT INSIDE YOUR HEAD.

FAT CHANCE OF *THAT* HAPPENING, LADY.

YOU'RE THE REPORTER?

WHO *ELSE* ARE YOU EXPECTING?

KATY KIERNAN. *DAILY INQUISITOR.*

GREAT PLACE FOR A SECRET MEETING. REAL *ORIGINAL.*

I CAN TELL YOU TAKE YOUR CLANDESTINE INFORMATION DROPS SERIOUSLY.

SHE'S CUTE. CHARMING.

SHE SCARES THE HELL OUT OF ME.

YOU HAVE INFORMATION FOR ME?

ANYONE EVER TELL YOU THAT YOU LOOK LIKE *SPIDER-MAN?*

I'VE HEARD THAT A FEW TIMES. IT GOES HAND IN HAND WITH "I *THOUGHT YOU'D* BE BIGGER."

DIFFERENT GUY, THOUGH.

LISTEN...NOT THAT I'M ANYTHING LESS THAN FABULOUS...BUT WHY WOULD YOU NEED MY HELP?

I WRITE ABOUT *BAT-BABIES* AND *JESUS* FIGURES APPEARING IN OATMEAL.

AND YOU LOOK LIKE YOU HAVE *CONNECTIONS.*

YEAH... AND THOSE CONNECTIONS HAVE COME UP WITH EXACTLY *ZILCH.*

YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND, SEEM TO HAVE SOME KIND OF GONZO INSIDE TRACK ON EXACTLY THE KIND OF THING THESE GUYS ARE MIXED UP IN.

YOU'RE TRACKING THE *DEPARTMENT OF OCCULT ARMAMENTS.*

WHAT'S THE MATTER? SECRET NAZI OCCULT WEAPONS DIVISION GOT YOUR TONGUE?

DON'T WORRY. AS WE AGREED, THIS IS STRICTLY *OFF-THE-RECORD.*

BUT ANYONE IN MY BUSINESS WHO'S WORTH A BYLINE HAS HEARD RUMORS OF THE *D.O.A.*

NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.

THIS IS A SIMPLE SNEAK-AND-PEEK OPERATION.

"THESE GUYS."

Y'KNOW, IT'S NOT ALL THAT HARD TO FIGURE OUT WHO YOU'RE AFTER.

AND THEY'RE *BAD NEWS.* I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T GO AFTER THEM WITH GUNS BLAZING.

WE CALL THEM *CODE: UATU* MISSIONS.

AND THAT MEANS--

"--DO NOT ENGAGE."

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM! BLAM!

OKAY. SO I FUMBLED THE BALL ON THAT ONE.

I'M ALREADY ON *THIN ICE* WITH HAWKEYE, AND THIS IS GONNA PISS HIM *OFF*.

BLAM!

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

LOST CONTACT WITH CONTROL WITHIN *SECONDS* OF WALKING THROUGH THE DOOR.

SOME SORT OF SIGNAL-SCRAMBLER, MAYBE?

I'VE GOT NOTHING ON THE COMM BUT STATIC... AND WHAT SOUNDS LIKE *SCREAMING BABIES*.

BLAM! BLAM!

BLAM!

HAD TO MAKE A JUDGMENT CALL.

ADMITTEDLY, *NOT* MY STRONG SUIT.

BUT I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE.

THE D.O.A.--THE *DEPARTMENT OF OCCULT ARMAMENTS*--IS A BUNCH OF NAZI DEMON-WORSHIPPERS DEDICATED TO GATHERING MAGICAL ARTIFACTS TO HELP THEM RULE THE WORLD.

THEY'VE BEEN SILENT FOR A WHILE, BUT RECENTLY THEY'VE BEEN ON THE MOVE, MAKING *WAVES*.

AND NOW IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE NO LONGER SATISFIED WITH SIMPLY COLLECTING MAGICAL *DOO-DADS*.

REINFORCEMENTS. MORE OF THE *ROBE-AND-HOOD GANG*.

GOTTA WONDER WHAT MAKES THEM FLOCK TO ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE D.O.A.

BEING *AFRAID*, MAYBE.

FEELING *POWERLESS*.

CRIPPLED BY LONELINESS AND SADNESS AND DESPERATION... LOOKING FOR ANYTHING TO BELIEVE IN...SOMETHING TO HELP YOU FORGET.

A BOTTLE OR DEVIL WORSHIP OR BEATING UP BAD GUYS... PICK YOUR POISON.

BLAM! *BLAM!*

BLAM!

BEEN THERE, DONE *THAT*.

NOT SURE *WHAT* THEY'RE DOING TO THESE PEOPLE, BUT I'LL BE *DAMNED* IF I'M GOING TO WATCH WHILE IT HAPPENS.

HANG ON.

I'M GONNA GET YOU OUT OF THERE.

HRRR...

RRRNNNNNCH!

I'M GONNA GET YOU ALL OUT.

NNNNNNNN

I'VE GOT YOU!

PULSE AND HEARTBEAT ARE STRONG.

HE'LL--

WHOA!

KAH!

YOU'RE TOO LATE!

TOO LATE!

HIS SOUL IS MINE!

I'LL OPEN YOUR RIB CAGE LIKE A *PANTRY DOOR* AND FEAST UPON YOUR *HEART!*

I'LL-- OOPH--

I--

FORGIVE ME.

I DID NOT REALIZE.

MY LORD.

COMMAND ME.

C-COMMAND?

I COMMAND YOU TO GET THE @#!% OUT OF HERE!

AS YOU DESIRE.

WAIT.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

DID I JUST BANISH A DEMON?

HOW--

AAAGGGH!

FWOOOOOOOOOOSH!

WHO?

AGENT VENOM.

I KNEW WE'D SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN, BUT I HAD NO IDEA IT WOULD BE SO *SOON*.

IT'S FUNNY HOW *DESTINY* WORKS. WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?

HELLSTROM!

BURN.

THIS GUY'S ON A *DIFFERENT LEVEL* THAN THE OTHERS.

BY ALL ACCOUNTS, HE'S ONE OF THE *LEADERS* OF THE NEW D.O.A.

HE MAY EVEN BE THE ACTUAL SON OF THE *DEVIL*.

VRRRROOOOOSH

TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, HE USED TO BE ONE OF THE *GOOD* GUYS UNTIL HE BETRAYED EVERYONE WHO'S EVER STOOD BY HIS SIDE.

CAN'T DO THIS ON MY OWN.

THIS HOCUS POCUS STUFF IS OUTSIDE OF MY *PAY GRADE*.

NEED TO GET CLEAR. NEED BACKUP.

I. SAID. BURN!

SLOW HIM DOWN.

BUY SOME TIME.

GET HELP. FIX THIS BEFORE IT GETS ANY WORSE.

BLAM! BLAM!

WHAT'S THIS? BULLETS?

BEFORE MY MISTAKES GET ME KICKED OUT OF THE SECRET AVENGERS...

VIP!

VIP!

VIP!

DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULD STOP *ME* WITH *BULLETS?*

BEFORE THEY STRIP ME OF THE SYMBIOTE...

BEFORE I'M JUST A NOBODY STUCK IN A CHAIR.

YEEEAAAAAGGGH!

THESE BLASTS OF *BALEFIRE* SHOULD BE STRONG ENOUGH TO STRIP THE HIDE OFF THE JUGGERNAUT.

AND I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE OF THE "*FIRE BAD!*" BRIGADE.

THERE'S NO WAY YOU SHOULD HAVE SURVIVED THAT...EVEN AS A LEGLESS TRAVESTY.

HELLSTROM...

YOU TALK TOO MUCH!

WH-WHOCK!

HHHK!

THE PAIN'S *MADDENING.*

I CAN HEAR THE SYMBIOTE *SCREAMING* IN MY HEAD.

KEEP MOVING. *FOCUS* ON SOMETHING ELSE.

FOCUS ON BEATING THE @#$% OUT OF THIS BASTARD!

SCORE ONE FOR *AGENT VENOM.*

MAYBE I'M *MORE* CAPABLE IN THE FACE OF MAGIC THAN I THOUGHT.

I'M ABOUT TO COLLAR THE *SON OF SATAN.*

YOU LIKE HEARING THE SOUND OF YOUR VOICE SO MUCH...

YOU AND ME ARE GONNA *TALK.*

OR WHAT?

YOU'LL EAT MY BRAINS?

NO. I'LL PAINT THE FLOOR WITH THEM.

YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO MELT BULLETS WITH THAT MAGICAL SALAD FORK OF YOURS, BUT I'M GUESSING AT THIS RANGE THEY'LL CRACK YOUR SKULL LIKE AN EGGSHELL.

TALK.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I WOULD THINK THE POSSESSION ENGINES SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

WE'RE BUILDING AN ARMY, OF COURSE.

BUT DON'T WORRY. EACH AND EVERY ONE OF OUR HOSTS ARE HERE ON A VOLUNTEER BASIS.

D.O.A. AGENTS, ONE AND ALL, READY TO MAKE A SACRIFICE FOR THE CAUSE.

BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT'S REALLY BOTHERING YOU, IS IT?

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY I SIDED WITH THE D.O.A., DON'T YOU?

I DON'T CARE WHY.

I WANT TO KNOW *HOW.*

HOW COULD YOU BETRAY YOUR FRIENDS LIKE YOU DID?

HOW COULD YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON *EVERYTHING* YOU BELIEVED IN?

I LOVE HOW YOU *ASSUME* YOU HAVE THE *SLIGHTEST* CLUE ABOUT WHAT I BELIEVE IN!

I LOVE HOW YOU *PRESUPPOSE* THERE'S SUCH AN EXPANSIVE GAP BETWEEN HERO AND MONSTER.

AND YOU'LL LEARN THIS SOON ENOUGH, BUT THOSE *"FRIENDS"* OF YOURS ARE JUST WAITING FOR THE MOMENT WHEN YOU GO *ROGUE.*

YOU AND I ARE A LOT ALIKE IN THAT REGARD.

I'M *NOT* LIKE YOU.

YOU THINK I CAN'T SEE *STRAIGHT* THROUGH *YOU?*

ALL THE *BLUSTER* AND *BRAVADO* IN THE WORLD CAN'T HIDE THE FACT THAT YOU'RE A *KILLER.*

AND YOU'RE TERRIFIED THAT ONE MISSTEP WILL AWAKEN THE *MONSTER* AGAIN.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT?

YOU'RE *RIGHT* TO BE AFRAID.

LET ME SHOW YOU.

NEEEAGHH!

SHZZUUKKRK!

NOT BAD.

AGAIN, THAT SPELL SHOULD HAVE BLASTED YOU INTO NOTHING.

L-LUCKY ME.

HOW CAN YOU DOUBT WHAT YOU ARE?

YOU'RE *MARKED*, VENOM.

MARKED BY THE *BEAST*.

AND IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT MY CHANGE OF HEART... WELL...

...I HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR THAT.

KRASH!

HHHK!

IF ONLY YOU COULD SEE MEPHISTO'S BRAND UPON YOUR FLESH... MAYBE THEN YOU'D BETTER UNDERSTAND.

MONSTERS, ARE WE *ALL*.

RRREEAAAAGGGH!

INTERNAL ORGANS TWIST.

BONES POP AND CRACK.

I VOMIT. SWALLOW IT DOWN. VOMIT AGAIN.

PHYSICAL PAIN IS UNBELIEVABLE, BUT IT'S *NOTHING* COMPARED TO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MY *MIND*.

SOMETHING CLAWS AT MY THOUGHTS.

SHREDS MY BRAIN...MAKING CONFETTI OF MY HOPES...DREAMS... NIGHTMARES.

NGGTTTAAAAAA!

TRYING TO TAKE OVER...TO FORCE ME *OUT*.

AND--GOD, HELP ME--I WANT TO LET IT!

THIS CAN'T HAPPEN...THE SYMBIOTE'S LOBOTOMIZED... IT CAN'T KICK LIKE THIS...

BETTY...JACK O'LANTERN... HAWKEYE...EVERYONE WAS RIGHT. I CAN'T CONTROL IT!

BREATHTAKING!

GRRRRRRAAAAAA!

VENOM #24
"MONSTERS OF EVIL PART 2"

Neverwake Factory.
Bronx, New York.

DON'T JUST STAND THERE WITH YOUR MOUTHS HANGING OPEN, MY DISCIPLES.

WE ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF AN *HONORED GUEST.*

WELCOME HIM.

WHAT *INSULT* IS THIS, SON OF SATAN?

I SEE NO *OFFERING*... NO SIGN OF *SUPPLICATION.*

I...

...*HUNGER.*

YOU HEARD HIM.

FETCH OUR VISITANT A PROPER...

...SNACK.

MY JOURNEY HAS BEEN LONG... TORTUROUS...

I HUNGER NOW.

I... I...

AIIIEEEE...

KKRUNCH!

DISGUSTING.

BUT OF COURSE.

WITHOUT APPROPRIATE *PREPARATIONS*, I IMAGINE HIM MOST OFFENSIVE TO YOUR DELICATE PALATE.

LUCKILY, WE'VE GATHERED MORE SUITABLE GIFTS.

SEASONED, SO TO SPEAK... POSSESSED BY YOUR LESSER BRETHREN.

IF, THAT IS, YOU HAVEN'T SPOILED YOUR APPETITE.

HRRRRRN.

THAT'S MORE TO MY LIKING.

WE ARE THE SACRIFICE!

FOR THE DARK LORD!

YES!

THAT'S...

HRRRNNG

WHAT...?

WHAT'S THIS?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?

PLEASE, NO!

I DIDN'T SIGN UP FOR THIS!

HELP ME!

RRREEEAAARRGHHH!

NO! THIS IS NOT MY FAULT!

RREEAAARRGGHH!

I WAS TRICKED! DECEIVED!

GET OUT OF

MY HEAD!

BRAVO, AGENT VENOM! BRAVO!

CLAWING YOUR WAY OUT FROM BENEATH A DEMON'S INFLUENCE...THAT'S NO SIMPLE FEAT.

YOU'LL MAKE AN IMPRESSIVE ADDITION TO MY LITTLE ZOO.

SHUT IT, HELLSTROM!

WHUUF!

ZOO?

WHAT DID HELLSTROM DO TO ME? PUT SOME SORT OF *MONSTER* INSIDE ME?

FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN TWISTED INSIDE OUT. LIKE I'M ALL WRONG...CORRUPTED...

BUT...PART OF ME--

THE SYMBIOTE?

--LIKES THE WAY THIS FEELS.

I BREATHE IN, AND I TASTE ALL THE WORLD'S MISERY AND PAIN...THE FEAR AND SORROW...

GOD HELP ME...IT TASTES-- *GOOD.*

TRY TO VOMIT IT UP. PUKE THE *DEMON* OUT OF ME.

BUT IT'S *ROOTED* INSIDE... LIKE AN ABSCESSED TOOTH.

BLAARRGH!

HOW MANY TIMES AM I GONNA FIND MYSELF LIKE THIS...

...TRYING TO PUKE THE *BAD STUFF* OUT?

NEED HELP.

NEED TO *YANK* THIS BASTARD OUT OF MY *SOUL*.

BUT IS THE SENATOR SECRETLY A *WOLFMAN?* THIS INTREPID INQUISITOR REPORTER SAYS... *MAYBE!*

KATY KIERNAN, YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN.

WHO NEEDS INTEGRITY?

TAK-TAK-TAKKITY-TAK-TAK

SKRRK

...

MS. K-KIERNAN...

AGENT VENOM?

N-NOT SURE WHERE ELSE TO GO, DEPARTMENT OF OCCULT ARMA*UNGH*MENTS... THEY...

I...NEED...

THE D.O.A....THEY MESSED YOU UP, DIDN'T THEY?

I *WARNED* YOU ABOUT THESE GUYS, DIDN'T I?

CAN'T REACH THE AVENGERS...D.O.A. CUT ME OFF SOMEHOW...

AND EVEN IF I COULD I...

SCREWED UP... SCREWED UP... REAL BAD.

I'LL GET YOU SOME WATER.

N-NO... DON'T NEED WATER...

I...I THINK...

I THINK I NEED AN EXORCIST.

Hidden & Esoterica

OH, MAN.

YOU WERE RIGHT IN BRINGING HIM TO ME, KATY.

THIS IS *VENOM*...? YOU KNOW...THE...UH... SPIDER-MAN GUY...?

YES, OF COURSE, I KNOW.

Closed For Special Appointment

WHAT I MEANT TO ASK WAS IF YOU REALLY KNOW.

I MEAN... HE'S DEEP UNDER. FULLY *HYPNOTIZED*.

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHO'S *UNDER* THE MASK?

REGGIE...

...JUST *DO* WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR, *OKAY?*

ALL RIGHT. YOU'RE THE BOSS.

BUT BEAR WITH ME. I HAVEN'T DONE ONE OF THESE SINCE I LEFT THE *CHURCH.*

ALL RIGHT... *SO...*

I WANT TO SPEAK WITH THE *ENTITY*...THE PRESENCE THAT HAS NESTED WITHIN THIS MAN'S *SOUL.*

CAN YOU *HEAR* ME?

CAN YOU *COMMUNICATE* WITH ME?

SURE YOU'RE DOING THIS RIGHT?

I'VE PERFORMED SIX OF THESE--

SEVEN, NOW...

...*"FATHER."*

YEAH?

I MEAN... YEAH. OKAY.

WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN THIS...*UHM*... VESSEL?

I CHOSE NOTHING.

THIS WAS NOT WHAT I WAS PROMISED.

POWER. FREEDOM. ENDLESS SLAUGHTER.

BUT THIS... TO POSSESS ONE WHO IS MARKED...

IT IS FORBIDDEN.

FORBIDDEN BY WHO?

OH.

SO...IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE HERE, WHY DON'T YOU... Y'KNOW...*BEGONE* AND SUCH?

I TRY TO BREAK FREE, BUT THE VESSEL JUST DRAGS ME BACK DOWN!

HELP ME!

GET ME OUT OF HERE! PLEASE!

HELP!

THE VESSEL?

YOU MEAN AGENT VENOM?

AGH!

NNNN

WHA...

WHAT HAPPENED?

AM I-- WHAT?-- EXORCISED?

NOT QUITE.

IT...UH... LOOKS LIKE THE DEMON... *WANTS* TO LEAVE BUT *CAN'T*.

HOWEVER YOU MANAGED TO SUBVERT ITS INFLUENCE OVER YOU... IT'S...UH...

IT'S LIKE *YOU'RE* POSSESSING IT.

SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO NOW?

MY ADVICE?

YOU NEED TO FIND WHOEVER IT WAS WHO DID THIS TO YOU.

HELLSTROM.

DAIMON HELLSTROM?

YOU KNOW HIM?

DOES SHE KNOW HIM? SHE--

I KNOW *ENOUGH*.

BUT I CAN'T SAY I HAVE ANY IDEA HOW TO FIND HIM.

I KNOW *WHERE* TO LOOK.

The Bronx Zoo.

EXOTIC ANIMAL WALKABOUT

EXOTIC ANIMAL WALKABOUT

MR. HELLSTROM? DAIMON...

THE WORLD OF APES

SIR... NEED I REMIND YOU THAT MISTRESS SIN SANCTIONED THIS OPERATION BECAUSE YOU PROMISED IT WOULD STRENGTHEN *THE D.O.A.?*

YOU PROMISED *RESULTS.*

AND I'VE DELIVERED.

TRUE...BUT WHAT HAPPENED AT THE FACTORY SITE...THIS BUSINESS WITH *AGENT VENOM*...

IT CAN ONLY BE SEEN AS A MAJOR *SETBACK*...IF HE FOUND US SO EASILY...

A PIECE OF ADVICE, YOU SNIVELING, NUMBER-CRUNCHING *WORM*...

LET THE BIG BOYS DO THEIR *WORK* WHILE YOU CONCENTRATE ON TRYING TO APPEAR *USEFUL.*

BECAUSE AS FAR AS *I'M* CONCERNED, YOUR ONLY REAL VALUE IS AS A *SOURCE* OF BLOOD TO OIL THE POSSESSION *ENGINES.*

DON'T WORRY ABOUT *AGENT VENOM* FINDING US.

HE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY. I JUST NEED TO SHOW HIM HOW *PERFECTLY* HE FITS IN WITH MY *PET PROJECT*.

RUN ALONG NOW. MAKE WHATEVER REPORT YOU FEEL NECESSARY TO *"MISTRESS SIN."*

I HOPE THE CRAZY WITCH COMES DOWN FROM HER *MESSIANIC* CLOUD LONG ENOUGH TO HEAR YOU OUT.

DEVILS SAVE US FROM THE PENCIL PUSHERS.

BUT WE SHOULD MAKE READY FOR A VISIT FROM VENOM.

HE'LL BE DRAWN TO US NOW...

DAMN STRAIGHT...

...BUT A LITTLE TOO LATE TO ROLL OUT THE WELCOME MAT.

SO LET'S CUT TO THE CHASE.

WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME?

UUNNF!

SO...I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN *MASK* MYSELF FROM PRYING EYES...

I LIKE YOU *MORE* AND *MORE* EVERY TIME WE--

HKK!

STILL LIKE ME?

BECAUSE, *FRIEND*, YOU'RE GOING TO *FIX* THIS.

TH-THERE'S *NOTHING* TO FIX. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU.

IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE YOU'RE IN CONTROL...YOU HAVE ALL THE *POWER*...

YOU PUT A *DEMON* INSIDE ME!

YEEAAAGGH!

I WANT IT OUT.

YOU'RE *NOT* A PUPPET, ARE YOU?

EVERYTHING YOU'RE DOING... EVERYTHING YOU'RE FEELING...ALL THAT *ANGER* AND *HATRED*...

THAT'S ALL *YOU*, ISN'T IT?

PERHAPS THE DEMON WAS *ALWAYS* THERE.

NOT SURE I COULD KILL HELLSTROM IF I *WANTED* TO...

...BUT...GOD HELP ME...I WANT TO *TRY*.

I'M NOT MESSING AROUND HERE.

OBVIOUSLY NOT.

SO I'M SURE YOU CAN APPRECIATE THAT I'M NOT "*MESSING AROUND*" EITHER.

WHOOOSHH!

RRRR-UNNNNGH!

CHEAP SHOT FROM BEHIND.

SOME KIND OF FLAMES...IF FLAMES WERE MADE OF *ACID*.

SOMETHING DEEP DOWN STIRS.

THE DEMON... SENSES SOMETHING...

...RECOGNIZES ITS OWN--

HOLY--

HHNNF!

WHACK!

ICE!

ICE!

ICE!

ICE!

@#$% DEMONS...

ACK! GAAAH!

HEADS UP.

I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MY FRIENDS...

WHHACK!

...THE MONSTERS OF EVIL!

THINK... THINK I'M SCARED OF A FEW BIG-AND-UGLIES?

YOU SHOULD BE...

THEY'LL HAPPILY KILL YOU WHERE YOU STAND IF I GIVE THE ORDER.

BUT THEY'D MUCH RATHER WELCOME THEIR BROTHER INTO THEIR RANKS.

VENOM #25
"MONSTERS OF EVIL PART 3"

OKAY. MONSTERS.

SHRAKKOW!

HRRROOF!

LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A LATE NIGHT RUBBER SUIT CREATURE FEATURE.

ONLY IF *DEMONS* WORE THE MONSTER SUITS INSTEAD OF ACTORS.

RRRRNNNNN

FWHWWWOOOSSSH

THAT IDEA ALONE IS ENOUGH TO TURN MY GUTS TO JELLY, MY MIND TO MUSH.

CHWOMP!

RREEEAAAGGHH!

MILITARY TRAINING *DOESN'T* PREPARE YOU FOR THIS.

BUT I'M NOT JUST A SOLDIER. I'M A *SUPER HERO.*

SUPER HEROES PUSH THROUGH THE MADNESS, RIGHT?.

SH-SHUNK-

SHUNK!

GRRR

AHAAAAGH!

OKAY. THAT WAS AWFUL.

WHAT DID HELLSTROM CALL THESE GUYS?

THE MONSTERS OF EVIL.

GUESS THAT PUTS A PRETTY BOW ON THEIR JOB DESCRIPTIONS.

BUT DESPITE THE NAME...DESPITE MY *BROKEN* NOSE AND *CRACKED* RIBS AND *PUNCTURED* SPLEEN...

I DON'T THINK THESE GUYS ARE *TRYING* TO KILL ME.

YEAH. THAT'S NOT CREEPY.

HELLSTROM. THE SON OF SATAN.

WHATEVER THAT MEANS.

HE PUT THIS LITTLE PARTY TOGETHER.

IT'S USELESS TO STRUGGLE THIS WAY, AGENT VENOM, I ASSURE YOU.

EVEN *BEFORE* I POSSESSED THEM WITH *DEMONS*, EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THESE *CREATURES* WAS *ANCIENT* AND *POWERFUL* IN WAYS YOU CAN'T EVEN *IMAGINE*.

JUST LIKE THAT *SYMBIOTE* YOU'VE BONDED WITH.

GRAGOA WAS ONCE FEARED AS A GOD IN WHAT IS NOW THE MOLE MAN'S KINGDOM.

LORD TIKI, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS AN ANCIENT IDOL BROUGHT TO LIFE BY A BOTCHED FERTILITY RITUAL.

THINK HAPPY THOUGHTS.

MOM?

UGH... NO.

LIKE YOUR SYMBIOTE, THE *WORM* CAME FROM THE DEPTHS OF SPACE...

WITH A GOAL OF STUDYING *MANKIND*.

HER SHIP... AND HER LAB...WAS DESTROYED BY FARMERS WHO CONNECTED HER, *RIGHTFULLY SO*, TO A STRING OF CATTLE MUTILATIONS.

BETTY?

HSSST!

SWING AND A MISS.

THE NOXIOUS *SKUNK APE* WAS ONCE A HUMAN SCIENTIST WHOSE RESEARCH INTO EVOLUTION PROVED... *TRANSFORMATIVE*.

THWAM!

UH...HIGH SCHOOL?

GOD, NO...

AND THE *SPHINX* IS... WELL...FROM THE ERA YOU MIGHT EXPECT...

...ONLY TIME-LOST *THANKS* TO ITS OWN RIDDLES AND CURSES.

I'VE GIVEN THEM PURPOSE--*TRUE* PURPOSE.

AND I CAN DO THE SAME...AND *MORE*... FOR YOU...IF ONLY YOU'LL JOIN US.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

DO I HAVE ANY HAPPY THOUGHTS?!

FWAMM!

I SAY--

GO #!%@ YOURS--

HRRRK!

PITY.

YEEEAAAAAAA--

BEING A SUPER HERO BLOWS.

--OOF!

SMMASH!

WHEN YOU'RE SPLASHING INTO THE MUCK IN AN ABANDONED REPTILE HOUSE, IT'S IMPORTANT TO FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE.

SPLOOSH!

HELLSTROM MADE THE OLDEST MISTAKE IN THE VILLAIN HANDBOOK. HE TOLD ME HIS PLANS.

USING MONSTERS AS *HOSTS* FOR DEMONS.

BUILDING HIMSELF AN *ARMY* OF SUPER-BEASTS.

TO HIM, I'M JUST ANOTHER *MONSTER*.

BUT THIS MONSTER KNOWS HOW TO BEAT HIM. I JUST HAVE TO TAKE THE FIGHT BACK TO HIM.

AND FACE DOWN FIVE DEMONICALLY ENHANCED MONSTERS.

PIECE OF CAKE.

FIND HIM! ROUT HIM OUT!

THE UPSTART HAS ENSLAVED ONE OF YOUR BRETHREN! HE'S *TRAPPED* HIM WITHIN HIS TISSUE!

IF HE WON'T AID OUR CAUSE, THEN RIP THE HELLSPAWN FREE OF HIS FLESH!

WHEN I FIRST RAN INTO HELLSTROM...WHEN I FIRST ENCOUNTERED HIS DEVIL-HAUNTED FLUNKIES...

I PULLED SOME CRAZY #$%*.

TOOK CONTROL OF MY BODY AGAIN, EVEN THOUGH A DEMON WAS IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT.

BANISHED ANOTHER DEMON JUST BY TELLING IT TO TAKE A WALK.

QUESTION IS...CAN I DO IT AGAIN?

THAT'S A BIG QUESTION, CONSIDERING I HAVE NO IDEA *HOW* I MANAGED TO DO THOSE THINGS.

WHEN MY DAD TAUGHT ME TO *SWIM*, HE JUST THREW ME INTO THE DEEP END OF THE POOL.

HEY!

AND WHEN I WHINED ABOUT IT, HE HELD ME UNDER.

HEADS UP!

RRRAAAAARRRRRRRRGGGKK!

GULPING DOWN MOUTHFULS OF WATER...

...CHOKING...

IN THAT MOMENT, I'D NEVER BEEN MORE SCARED.

IN THAT MOMENT, I'D NEVER HATED MY FATHER MORE.

SKLORTCH!

REEEEEEEGGGHHHKKK!

SKKLLK!

BUT I STARTED KICKING...

I LEARNED TO SWIM.

I CAN USE THAT...THE FEAR... THE HATE...

MAKE IT WORK FOR ME *NOW* LIKE IT WORKED BACK THEN.

OKAY, THOMPSON. IT'S SINK OR SWIM.

START KICKING.

IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN THAT TO KILL THE THING.

AFTER ALL, IT'S GOT TWO MORE HEADS.

REEEEGG!

BUT IT'S SCREAMING...

...CLAWING AT MY BRAIN...

...IT'S SCREAMING...

RRRRRRRREEEEEGGGHHHHKKK!

...WILL BRING THE OTHERS.

HOLD. AND LISTEN.

IT'S... WORKING.

HELLSTROM!

WHAT?

YOU STILL LOOKING FOR ME?

AH... AGENT VENOM.

STILL ALIVE, I SEE.

HANGING IN THERE.

AND IF YOU'LL JUST THROW DOWN THAT PITCHFORK OF YOURS, WE CAN BOTH GET ON WITH OUR NIGHT.

YOU'RE BARELY ABLE TO STAND...YOU'RE *OUTNUMBERED* AND *OUTMATCHED*...

YOU'RE ALONE... AND YOUR "SECRET AVENGERS" WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND ME!

THERE'S NO *SECRET* I CAN'T TWIST TO MY OWN NEEDS.

BUT I'M HAPPY TO DISCUSS *YOUR* SURRENDER IF YOU LIKE.

HA HA HA HA HA HA!

YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT ONE THING.

I'M NOT ALONE.

WHA--

NOT THE FIRST TIME I'VE LED A BUNCH OF MONSTERS IN PICKING ON SOMEBODY SMALLER.

BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IT FELT REALLY *GOOD*.

REEEEAAAAARRRRGGGHH!

ALL RIGHT. THAT'S ENOUGH!

I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.

ALL OF YOU...GET LOST...AND DON'T LET ME SEE OR HEAR ABOUT YOU AGAIN.

YOU WANT TO EAT, FORAGE FOR BERRIES OR SOMETHING.

YOU CUT OUT OF LINE, AND I'LL KNOW IT. AND I'LL *FIND* YOU.

THAT'S *SOMETHING*, ISN'T IT?

WASN'T SURE I COULD DO THAT, BUT I'M FULL OF SURPRISES.

SEEMS TO ME THAT WE'VE GOT A *LOT* TO TALK ABOUT, DON'T WE?

MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE.

I'M SURE THE GUARDS WILL BRING YOU A CHAIR IF YOU ASK FOR ONE.

I WON'T BE HERE LONG.

I'LL STAND.

SUIT YOURSELF.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, AGENT VENOM?

EXPLAIN IT TO ME.

EXPLAIN *WHAT*, EXACTLY?

WHY I'M ABLE TO CONTROL DEMONS.

AH. THE MARK.

THERE'S A LEGEND THAT CIRCULATES IN HELL, AGENT VENOM.

A BEDTIME STORY TOLD TO BABY DEVILS IN THEIR CRIBS OF SINEW AND BONE.

I NEVER REALLY BELIEVED IT, BUT IT APPEARS THAT SOMEONE DOES.

IT'S A LUXURY NO HELL-BEING SHOULD BE AFFORDED.

IT'S *HOPE*.

MOST SCHOLARS WOULD HAVE AGREED WITH MY ASSUMPTION.

A MYTH. NOTHING MORE.

BUT YOU CHANGED ALL THAT FOR ME.

"IN LAS VEGAS...WHEN I SAW YOU AND YOUR COMPANIONS...MARKED THE WAY YOU WERE...

"I STARTED TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES.

"WHAT IF THE BEDTIME STORIES WERE TRUE?"

THE *DESCENT*.

THE DAY WHEN ONE OF THE HELL-LORDS WILL FALL FARTHER THAN THE OTHERS... AND IN SO DOING WILL BECOME THE *TRUE* DEVIL.

IT'S REAL... AND MEPHISTO IS PREPARING FOR IT.

HE'S MARKING HIS POTENTIAL *HEIRS*.

AND THE OTHER DEMON LORDS ARE SURELY DOING THE SAME.

HEIR?

BUT *MEPHISTO* IS A...

I'M NOT A DEVIL.

"NEITHER AM I.

"NOT *YET*.

"BUT ONCE THE DESCENT HAS OCCURRED, ONE OF US WILL BE.

"YOU COULD CONTROL A CORNER OF HELL. OR I COULD.

"IF NOT ONE OF US, THEN SOMEONE ELSE WHO HAS BEEN MARKED."

AND THAT'S WHY YOU *BETRAYED* EVERYONE?

THAT'S WHY YOU *SIGNED* ON WITH THE D.O.A.?

I'VE CHOSEN THE ALLIES I BELIEVE TO BE *MOST USEFUL* IN THE DAYS TO COME.

YES, THEY'VE TRIED TO DESTROY THE WORLD, AND THEY'LL LIKELY TRY TO DO SO AGAIN.

BUT THEY'RE ALREADY STACKING THE DECK FOR THE WORLD THAT WILL RISE FROM THE ASHES.

THEY'RE FINDING OTHER MARKED INDIVIDUALS TO SERVE *THEIR* INTERESTS IN HELL.

SOMETIMES, YOU DO THE WRONG THING FOR THE RIGHT REASONS.

SOMETIMES, THE ONLY WAY TO COMBAT ULTIMATE EVIL IS *WITH* ULTIMATE EVIL.

SORRY.

I MUST'VE CUT CLASS THE DAY THEY TAUGHT THAT LESSON AT CRAZY SCHOOL.

CRAZY SCHOOL.

I LIKE THAT.

WELL, AGENT VENOM...CLASS IS IN SESSION.

BECAUSE WE'RE GOING TO HELP EACH OTHER, YOU AND I.

AND BEFORE YOU REFUSE... I WANT YOU TO *THINK* ABOUT SOMETHING...

WOULD YOU RATHER SEE *ME* SITTING ON A THRONE OF HELL...

...OR WOULD YOU RATHER SEE A *REAL* ♯#@% GET THE *JOB?*

SO...

...THE DEMONS?

WHICH ONES?

WHAT ON EARTH DID I DO TO DESERVE A LIFE WHERE I NEED TO BE EXTRA SPECIFIC ABOUT *WHICH* DEMONS I'M REFERRING TO?

THE DEMONS. THE ONES POSSESSING THOSE MONSTERS YOU MENTIONED.

STILL OUT THERE.

AND THE ONE POSSESSING *YOU?*

STILL IN HERE.

AND, AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL, *UNABLE* TO LEAVE.

FEELS A LITTLE LIKE HEARTBURN.

YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH OF A SUCCESS RATE, DO YOU?

I TOOK DOWN *HELLSTROM*, KATY.

THAT FEELS LIKE A WIN.

AND I WANTED TO THANK YOU...

YOU KNOW...

FOR ALL THE HELP.

BUT YOU NEED SOMETHING *ELSE*, DON'T YOU?

I'M NOT DONE WITH THE D.O.A. JUST YET.

AND NOBODY KNOWS AS MUCH ABOUT THIS *SUPERNATURAL* STUFF AS YOU DO.

WELL...DR. STRANGE, I GUESS.

YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW OFTEN HE CALLS FOR *HELP*.

WHAT ABOUT HELLSTROM?

LOOK, I NEED SOMEONE I CAN TRUST, OKAY?

AND I NEED SOMEONE WHO'LL *TRUST* ME.

I'M IN.

BUT NO MORE OF THIS OFF-THE-RECORD BUSINESS.

I'M ONLY HELPING YOU IF IT PUTS FOOD ON THE TABLE.

FAIR ENOUGH.

SO WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO BE RESEARCHING FOR YOU?

"LET'S START WITH THE END OF THE WORLD."

BETTY... HEY...

IT'S FLASH.

BUT YOU PROBABLY RECOGNIZED MY VOICE, HUH? IT HASN'T BEEN *THAT* LONG.

JUST FEELS THAT WAY.

LOOK...I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE OUT...OR YOU'RE SCREENING YOUR CALLS...OR WHAT.

BUT I WANTED TO CHECK IN WITH YOU...MAKE SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.

I WANTED TO...

I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE SAFE--

COME IN, AGENT VENOM.

DAMMIT-- WHAT? I WAS IN THE *MIDDLE* OF SOMETHING.

THIS IS THE LIGHTHOUSE SATELLITE.

WE NEED YOU IN COLORADO WE HAVE A PRISON-BREAK SCENARIO.

MINIMUM CARNAGE: ALPHA

MINIMUM CARNAGE: ALPHA

YES.

Thunderbolts Mountain
Maximum Security Prison.
Colorado.

THREE HOURS LATER.

WRRRNNNN-KK-WRRNN

GRRRNKK!

STAY ON MY SIX. LOOK SHARP.

THIS IS AN A-1 CHARLIE FOXTROT HERE, BUT KEEP IT TOGETHER AND YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

THAT'S IT, THOMPSON. TALK THE TALK. YOU'RE AGENT VENOM, "SUPER HERO."

DOESN'T TAKE A LOT OF INVESTIGATION TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.

'BOUT TIME YOU SHOWED UP!

A LOT OF STONE COLD KILLERS LOCKED UP HERE.

GET US OUT OF HERE!

IT'S GONNA KILL US, TOO!

LET US OUT!

BUT ONLY *ONE* WOULD TAKE SUCH DELIGHT IN DOING SOMETHING LIKE *THIS*.

THESE MEN...FOR ALL THEIR HEAVY ORDNANCE...ARE JUST *REGULAR GUYS*... LIKE I USED TO BE.

FLASH THOMPSON. VARSITY ALL-STAR, HIGH SCHOOL BULLY, AND DISABLED ARMY VET.

THEY DON'T HAVE THE BENEFIT OF AN *ALIEN SYMBIOTE*. THEY DON'T HAVE ENHANCED SENSES, STRENGTH, AND SPEED.

I'M THE *GUY*. THEY'RE LOOKING TO ME TO LEAD THEM THROUGH THIS. I CAN'T TELL THEM HOW BADLY THIS GUY *FREAKS* ME OUT.

HOLD UP.

LIKE CAPTAIN AMERICA ALWAYS *SAYS*, NEVER LET THEM SEE YOU @#$% YOUR *PANTS*.

I HATE IT WHEN I'M RIGHT.

SOMEONE BLEW THESE DOORS ALL TO HELL.

WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO SET THIS... *THING*... FREE?

THIS IS *WEIRD*.

LOOK AT THE WAY THE GLASS *FELL*.

THE WALLS HAVE BEEN BLASTED FROM *INSIDE* THE CELL.

HOW DID HE GET AHOLD OF A WEAPON *CAPABLE* OF SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

WHAT NOW, SIR?

NOW...

NOW WE HOPE FOR SURVIVORS WHO *AREN'T* AMERICA'S MOST AWFUL.

HE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET OUT.

WOULD'VE BEEN BEST TO PUT HIM OUT OF HIS *MISERY*.

HE'S A *MONSTER*.

AND MONSTERS ALWAYS COME BACK TO HAUNT YOU.

IT'S BACK!

GOOD GOD, IT'S BACK!

SHH-WAM!

AAAHHHH!

EVERYONE CALM DOWN, I AM AGENT VENOM. I'M AN AVENGER. I'M HERE TO HELP.

EVERYONE ALL RIGHT IN HERE?

WE ARE MOST CERTAINLY NOT ALL RIGHT.

WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED HERE?

HONESTLY... WE'RE NOT SURE...

WHOEVER HIT US, THEY SLIPPED RIGHT PAST SECURITY...CUT POWER TO A GOOD PART OF THE FACILITY...TOOK DOWN OUR COMMUNICATION...

AS SOON AS THE ALARMS WENT OFF, WE MANAGED TO SEAL OURSELVES IN HERE.

WE'RE RUNNING ON EMERGENCY POWER, BUT WE'RE JUST NOW GETTING SECURITY FOOTAGE ONLINE.

I HOPE YOUR PHONES ARE BACK UP, TOO.

WE NEED TO CALL STATE POLICE, THE F.B.I., THE NATIONAL GUARD... EVERYONE.

CLETUS KASADY HAS BROKEN OUT.

CARNAGE HAS ESCAPED.

SO WE'RE GONNA GO GET HIM.

I-25 South. Police Checkpoint.

TWO HOURS LATER.

--POINTLESS IF YOU ASK ME.

WE'RE STANDING OUT HERE PLAYING "SHOW-ME-YOURS" WITH A BUNCH OF MOTORISTS WHEN WE SHOULD BE OUT THERE HUNTING THIS PSYCHO DOWN.

THERE'S NO WAY A SERIAL KILLER LIKE CLETUS KASADY IS GONNA BE DRIVING.

BY NOW HE'S LONG GONE.

MAYBE THEY PUT US OUT HERE SO WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH HIM.

I MEAN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU DID STUMBLE ACROSS HIM?

I'D TAKE THESE SIZE TWELVES OF MINE AND RAM THEM RIGHT UP--

--HIS...

AFTERNOON, OFFICER.

DON'T MOVE!

Y'KNOW, OFFICER FRIENDLY, MY NEW PALS AREN'T GONNA LIKE YOU THREATENING ME LIKE THAT.

SHUT UP, KASADY!

YOU DON'T HAVE ANY FRIENDS OUT HERE.

SEE...THEY WENT THROUGH A LOT OF TROUBLE TO SPRING ME OUT OF PRISON, AND THEY'VE GOT BIG PLANS FOR LITTLE OL' ME.

YOU'RE GONNA MOVE NICE AND SLOW AND STEP OUT OF THE VEHICLE.

AND IF YOU SO MUCH AS TWITCH WRONG, I SWEAR TO GOD--

HRRK!

SLLSH!

VREET! VREET! VREET!

AAAGGH!

GGGGKKK

STATE TROOPS

TOLD YA.

"PLAY IT BACK."

WHOEVER'S KILLING THESE PEOPLE... THAT'S *NOT* CARNAGE.

COULD THE ASSAILANT BE *INVISIBLE* OR SOMETHING?

IMPOSSIBLE. WE'RE PREPPED FOR INVISIBILITY.

WHY WASN'T THE CARNAGE SYMBIOTE *DESTROYED?*

AT THE VERY LEAST, WHY WASN'T IT NEUTERED OR *SOMETHING?* THEY CAN DO THAT NOW. I'M *PROOF.*

DESTROYING THE SYMBIOTE IS *NOT* AS EASY AS YOU MIGHT THINK.

WE INCINERATED THE REMNANTS ON KASADY'S PERSON, BUT OUR DOCTORS TELL ME THE...*CREATURE*... IS PART OF KASADY'S BLOODSTREAM.

IT'S BONDED WITH HIM ON A CELLULAR LEVEL...NESTED IN HIS *DNA.*

SYMBIOTES CAN DO THAT?

WAIT... THERE.

I DON'T SEE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

ZOOM IN CLOSE ON THAT BODY.

WHAT IS *THAT?*

"WE'RE CASTING A WIDE NET, *HAWKEYE...*"

...BUT YOU KNOW HOW DANGEROUS CARNAGE CAN BE.

THE GUY CONQUERED A SMALL TOWN AND *YOUR* WHOLE TEAM OF AVENGERS IN A MATTER OF HOURS.

I'LL TRACK HIM, BUT AS SOON AS I FIND HIM, BE READY TO JUMP IN.

WE CAN'T TAKE CHANCES HERE. AND I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO THIS ALONE.

CARNAGE IS THE *OFFSPRING* OF THE VENOM SYMBIOTE.

HE'S COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL; AND HE'S UNFORTUNATELY *MY* RESPONSIBILITY.

Calling... KATY KIERNAN

I JUST NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO FIND HIM.

AGENT VENOM... THAT'S SOME VERY INTEREST-ING FOOTAGE YOU SENT.

AND I DON'T WANT IT POPPING UP IN YOUR TABLOID, MS. KIERNAN, AT LEAST UNTIL I CATCH KASADY.

CAN YOU MAKE ANYTHING OF IT? IS THERE ANYTHING IN THE *DAILY INQUISITOR* ARCHIVES LABELED "*REALLY TINY KILLERS*"?

...I'M SENDING YOU AN OLD ARTICLE RIGHT NOW.

Daily INQUISITOR

NOT EVERYTHING IS BIGGER IN TEXAS

WHAT IS THE PROMETHEUS PIT AND WHY ARE THEY BUILDING ONE IN HOUSTON?

Houston, Texas.
TWO DAYS LATER.

MY NAME IS KAINE

AND I WAS ENJOYING AN EARLY MORNING WESTERN OMELET WHEN REPORTS OF THE FIRE BROKE

ABOUT TEN MINUTES AFTER THAT, I REALIZED THAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. BECAUSE I'M A "SUPER HERO" NOW.

THE TOP FLOORS ARE SCREWED IF THEY DON'T GET CONTROL OF THIS

IT'S THE SCARLET SPIDER!

YOU'D HAVE TO BE SOME KIND OF IDIOT TO GO IN THERE. IF THE FLAMES DON'T GET YOU, THE SMOKE WILL.

AS IT TURNS OUT, BEING AN IDIOT IS ACTUALLY IN MY DNA.

IS ANYONE IN HERE?!

CAN ANYBODY HEAR--

--ME?

I'VE SEEN DEATH BEFORE. I'VE KILLED BEFORE. BUT THIS... WHOEVER DID THIS, THEY ENJOYED IT. THEY SAVORED IT.

I ALMOST DON'T NOTICE THIS GUY. THE SIGHT OF IT ALL IS SO OVERWHELMING.

SORRYIM SORRYSOSORRY PLEASEGODFORGIVE MEFORGIVEMEFOR GIVEMEEEEE

HEY...HEY! ARE YOU *OKAY?* WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE... WE HAVE TO--

AHHHHHHHHH! AHHHHHH!!

AHHHHH!!

HE'S LOST IT. THIS GUY SAW IT... WHOEVER *DID* THIS, HE SAW IT ALL. BUT IT'S LIKE HE'S SCARED OF *ME*.

CAN BARELY *BREATHE* IN HERE. NO TIME FOR THIS.

AAAAHHHH!

"THE VICTIM WAS *NELL FLETCHER*, 79 YEARS OLD."

Park Plaza Hospital, Houston Medical Center.

THEY HAD TO CARRY HER OUT IN *BAGS*. WHO WOULD DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO AN *OLD WOMAN?*

THERE ARE PEOPLE, LIFE MEANS *NOTHING* TO THEM. *KILLING* COMES AS EASY AS *BREATHING*. TRUST ME... I KNOW.

BUT THIS... WHO IS THIS GUY?

HIS NAME IS *RYAN KETOLA*. FLETCHER'S SON-IN-LAW, APPARENTLY. MELAND IS *SEDATING* HIM NOW, BUT HE SAID...HE SAID THAT A *MONSTER* DID THIS.

A *MONSTER* THAT LOOKED LIKE THE *SCARLET SPIDER*.

...HOPEFULLY WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT IT *WASN'T* ME.

RELAX. MULTIPLE HPD OFFICERS WITNESSED HOUSTON'S VERY OWN *SUPER HERO* ARRIVE AT THE SCENE AFTER THE FIRE STARTED.

I WILL *PAY* YOU NOT TO CALL ME THAT.

HE'S ASLEEP, THANK *GOD*. I'VE NEVER SEEN SOMEONE SO SCARED.

DID HE SAY ANYTHING *ELSE?*

YES, WALLY, HE *IS* GOING TO BE FINE, THANKS FOR ASKING.

WHOEVER DID THIS, HE SAID THEY DIDN'T WANT HIM. THEY WANTED HIS *WIFE*.

LET'S FIND HER. *NOW.*

"I'M SORRY, MS...KIERNAN, WAS IT? BUT I'M AFRAID THERE'S REALLY NOT MUCH TO TELL YOU.

"THE RUMORS OF OUR EFFORTS TO EXPLORE A *SUB-ATOMIC UNIVERSE* ARE GREATLY *EXAGGERATED*."

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS & SPACE ADMINISTRATION

LYNDON B. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, *DR. KETOLA*, I WOULDN'T COME ALL THE WAY FROM NEW YORK CITY OVER A RUMOR.

I'VE WRITTEN ABOUT THIS BEFORE. THREE YEARS AGO, WHEN YOUR TEAM DECIDED TO REKINDLE THE RESEARCH OF PROFESSOR PHILIP PROMETHEUS, A NOTED ASTRONAUT, SCIENTIST AND MADMAN.

AND, JUST SO WE'RE CLEAR, I *NEVER* SAID YOU WERE TRYING TO *EXPLORE* A SUB-ATOMIC UNIVERSE.

I SAID YOU WERE TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO *PLUNDER* THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF ANOTHER WORLD.

YES. OF COURSE.

I SHOULD HAVE *REMEMBERED* YOUR NAME.

JUST AS I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER THAT OUR RESEARCH IS *HIGHLY CLASSIFIED*.

SEE...THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH A GIRL LIKE ME. I'M JUST TOO CURIOUS FOR MY OWN GOOD.

WHAT'S MORE...I *HATE* BEING TOLD NO.

I'M AFRAID THERE'S NO STORY HERE FOR YOU.

I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS TIME.

I'M VERY BUSY, SO I'LL ASK *SECURITY* TO ESCORT YOU--

SORRY...

THEY JUST WENT *OFF* THE CLOCK.

WHAT'S THAT YOU WERE SAYING ABOUT A *PROMETHEUS PIT* BEING IN WORKING ORDER?

I WANNA *RIDE* THAT SUCKER, DR. KETOLA.

CLETUS KASADY!

HOW...

HOW DID YOU KNOW MY NAME?

I'M A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY.

YOUR HUSBAND SAYS HI!

OH, MY--

CRASH!

CARNAGE!

HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN YEARS

HE WON'T REMEMBER ME, BUT I TRIED TO KILL HIM.

LOOKS LIKE I GET TO TRY AGAIN

GET DOWN!

AAAH!

UHN!

RUN.

SPIDER, SPIDER, SPIDER. YOU JUST CAN'T STAY AWAY FROM ME, CAN YOU? YOU LOVE ME. EVERYWHERE I GO, YOU FOLLOW.

WHERE I'M GOING NOW, THOUGH... YOU CAN'T COME. I GUESS I HAVE TO KILL YOU NOW. THROUGH YOUR BRAINS, I THINK. BUT I'M GOING TO MISS YOU AND YOUR JOKES AND--

DO I LOOK LIKE I'M JOKING?

SNAP!

THAT WAS DIFFERENT

WHAT THE HELL--?

I LIKE IT

HNN!

SHUUK!

SHUNK!

SLASH!

AAAHH!

CLAWS? I'M STARTING TO THINK YOU'RE NOT SPIDER-MAN.

YOU'RE ABOUT TO SEE HOW MUCH I'M *NOT* SPIDER-MAN.

NNYEAARGHH!

ZZAARRKK

AHAHAHAHA...

SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIENDS.

THUD!

THIS...

THIS IS NOT @#$%&^# HAPPENING.

THERE'S NO *TIME* FOR THIS, KASADY.

WE HAVE TO GET TO THE *PIT*, NOW!

TINY PEOPLE?

THERE'S ALWAYS TIME FOR THIS

SPIDERS ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE LOTS OF EYES. I THINK I'LL GIVE YOU SOME MORE EYEHOLES.

VDM! VDM! VDM!

GET...OH, GOD.

GET AWAY FROM HIM.

FEISTY! I LIKE THAT

LET'S TAKE THIS DATE ON THE ROAD

WAIT. THE SCIENTIST I KNOW, I MET HER MOM AN' HUBBY

BUT WHO ARE YOU?

I'M... I'M A REPORTER...

REALLY? WELL, I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU TO REPORT

RAIDUS, CENTIVROS... COVER THE EXITS. XERXES, THE SKY IS YOURS.

KREVIUS... YOU AND NULL-TRON DEAL WITH THE HUMAN SCIENTIST.

OPEN THE PIT.

AS YOU COMMAND, VERAS.

HNN...

WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ME?

I CAN SEE IT IN HER MIND. SHE'S SOLVED THE LAST ALGORITHM.

PSYCHIC INTERFACE ENGAGED.

DOWNLOADING...

ACTIVATING THE PROMETHEUS PIT.

YOU FIRST

WHAT ARE YOU-- WAAAHHH!

SQUAD, MOVE OUT!

REMEMBER THE DEAL, KASADY.

I KNOW. I KILL FOR YOU, YOU GIVE ME A WHOLE LIFE. A NEW START.

A WHOLE NEW UNIVERSE TO KILL PEOPLE IN.

WHA--?!

THWIP

STICKY.

I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU YET.

WELL, I'M DONE HERE. I'M DONE WITH ALL OF YOU HEROES. ALWAYS SO ANGRY WITH ME. ALWAYS TAKING AWAY MY TOWNS, LOCKING ME UP, TEARING ME IN HALF.

AHHH!

SHLUK!

SO, I'M RETIRING!

GOODBYE, NOT-SPIDER-MAN!

NO!

THEY'RE GONE!

DAMMIT... DAMMIT!

KILL YOU. I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!

I'M GOING TO--

STEP AWAY FROM THE PIT!

GET DOWN ON THE GROUND AND PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!

--KILL YOU.

SCARLET SPIDER #10
"MINIMUM CARNAGE PART 2: INNER SPACE"

The NASA LBJ Space Center. Houston, Texas.

THEY'RE DEAD

EVERY SECURITY GUARD, EVERY SCIENTIST, EVERY SINGLE PERSON HERE... THEY'RE ALL *DEAD*

HEAD IS POUNDING. MY ENTIRE BODY *FEELS* LIKE IT'S ON FIRE. IT'S NOT THE PAIN. IT'S THE *RAGE*.

HAVEN'T FELT LIKE THIS SINCE... SINCE *BEFORE*.

SINCE *REILLY*

I CAME HERE TO STOP A KILLER, AND FOUND A MONSTER. I TRIED TO STOP IT AND I *FAILED*.

THE BLOOD. IT'S ALL ON *MY* HANDS.

EVERYTHING *CARNAGE* DID, HE DID BECAUSE I COULDN'T *STOP* HIM.

KILL YOU. I'M GOING TO *KILL YOU!*

I'M GOING TO--

STEP AWAY FROM THE PIT!

GET DOWN ON THE GROUND AND PUT YOUR HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!

SHLIK!

SHLIK!

--KILL YOU.

YOU MAY WANT TO RETHINK THAT.
Marvel Comics Proudly Presents
MINIMUM CARNAGE
PART 2: INNER SPACE

OKAY. OKAY, LET'S JUST ALL SETTLE DOWN HERE. I DON'T WANT TO SHOOT YOU, YOU DON'T WANT TO STAB ME.

YOU'RE WRONG.

BEFORE ONE OF US DOES SOMETHING WE'LL REGRET, LET'S JUST TALK--

@#$% YOU!

YOU'RE...YOU'RE THE OTHER SPIDER-MAN, AREN'T YOU? THE ONE WHO KILLED THE QUEEN IN NEW YORK, I SAW YOU.*

I WAS THERE...I SAW YOU *KILL* HER, BUT THEN YOU DISAPPEARED.

I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU, MAN. I WANT THE SAME THING YOU WANT...

*DURING THE SPIDER-ISLAND EVENT! --BACKLIST BRENNAN.

...TO STOP CARNAGE.

IF YOU EVER TOUCH ME AGAIN, I'LL KILL YOU.

I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND. MY NAME IS--

VENOM.

WHAT?

HOW IS THAT--

YOU'RE VENOM...I REMEMBER YOU.

WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING HERE? WHY IS CARNAGE IN HOUSTON?

AND WHAT THE @#$% WERE THOSE LITTLE PEOPLE HE HAD WITH HIM?!

YOU SAW THEM?!

WE THINK THEY BROKE CARNAGE OUT OF HIS PRISON. I'VE BEEN TRACKING HIM FROM COLORADO, WORKING WITH A REPORTER NAMED ***KATY KIERNAN.*** SHE THINKS THAT HE'S HEADING FOR--

HN.

HEADING FOR WHAT?

???

HN.

HEY... ***HEY!*** ARE YOU HAVING A STROKE OR SOMETHING?

OH, GOD...

OH, GOD, GET BACK.

RUN!

IT'S TRYING TO EAT ME

HE WAS JUST STANDING THERE TALKING NOW...OH GOD... NOW IT'S TRYING TO EAT ME

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!

THIS ISN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN... I CAN'T...

I CAN'T CONTROL IT!

GET OUT OF HERE! YOU HAVE TO *RUN!*

HE...IT...THE SYMBIOTE, IT'S TOO STRONG

I'M GOING TO DIE. AFTER EVERYTHING I'VE BEEN THROUGH...I'M GOING TO DIE TODAY

NEVER BEEN SCARED TO *DIE* BEFORE BECAUSE I WAS *ALWAYS* DYING

BUT NOW

NO!

I'M NOT GOING TO DIE TODAY.

HRRRHLURR...

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

EVEN IF I HAVE TO KILL SOMEONE TO STOP IT FROM HAPPENING.

THAK

HNNN!

THAK THAK THAK THAK THAK THAK

I SEE VENOM'S *SKIN* SPIT THE BULLETS OUT, SAME WAY IT HAPPENED WITH CARNAGE.

DOESN'T MATTER. DON'T LET UP. DON'T LET HIM HAVE A SECOND.

I FIGHT LIKE I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO *LOSE*.

THAT'S *NEW*

STAY DOWN, DO YOU HEAR ME?! STAY--

SPAK

UH-OH

KRAKOW

WHOEVER YOU ARE, THE SYM NOT GOT Y TO!

I CAN HEAR THE GUY SCREAMING AT ME TO FIGHT.

THE GUY THAT'S *KILLING* ME IS TELLING ME TO GET UP, TO NOT GIVE UP

DON'T DO THIS... DON'T DO THIS!

NYEEAAAAHHH!

COME ON!

RRRAA!

AHUH... HUH...I DID IT.

OH, GOD...OH, GOD, IT GOT CONTROL.

YOU SON OF A @#$%!

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!

YOU'RE A DEAD MAN, DO YOU HEAR ME?

I'M GOING TO KILL--

JUST SHUT UP A SECOND. LOOK.

HNNN...

A SURVIVOR. I MISSED HER.

OH...

MY NAME IS AGENT VENOM. ARE YOU DR. KETOLA?

YES...OH, GOD. OH, GOD, IT KILLED ANDERSON AND--

DOCTOR... I NEED YOU TO FOCUS. WHERE IS CARNAGE?

HE WENT THROUGH THE PROMETHEUS PIT. HE TOOK THE REPORTER...HE TOOK HER INTO THE MICROVERSE.

CARNAGE TOOK KATY?

WHAT IS SHE TALKING ABOUT? WHAT THE HELL IS A *MICROVERSE?*

SUBATOMIC SPACE...A WHOLE UNIVERSE THAT EXISTS BETWEEN SUBATOMIC PARTICLES...IT'S INFINITE.

AND THERE'S *LIFE* THERE.

YEARS AGO, A MAN NAMED PROMETHEUS FOUND A WAY TO TRAVEL THERE. I WAS ABLE TO REBUILD HIS WORK.

AND NOW *CARNAGE* IS THERE.

WE HAVE TO GO *AFTER* HIM.

@#$% THAT.

IF CARNAGE IS GONE, THEN GOOD *RIDDANCE.*

GET THIS THROUGH YOUR *HEAD.* I AM NOT *SPIDER-MAN.*

WHAT? HOW CAN YOU JUST LET HIM GO LIKE THAT?

AND IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, YOU JUST TRIED TO *KILL* ME A FEW MINUTES AGO.

LOOK, DAMMIT...WE HAVE TO GO AFTER HIM.

CARNAGE IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY.

DON'T. DON'T SAY THAT TO ME, EVER.

LET CARNAGE GO TERRORIZE LEPRECHAUNS IN SOME OTHER UNIVERSE, I DON'T GIVE A @#$%.

JUST SO LONG AS HE STAYS OUT OF HOUSTON.

IF HE COMES BACK, HE'S GOING TO COME BACK HERE.

AND HE *WILL* COME BACK.

IF YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT SAVING INNOCENT LIVES, THEN *HELP* ME.

HELP ME MAKE CARNAGE PAY FOR HIS CRIMES.

GO TO MICRO-LAND, OR HELL FOR ALL I CARE.

THIS JUST STOPPED BEING MY PROBLEM.

DAMMIT.

DOCTOR... WHEREVER CARNAGE WENT, I NEED TO FOLLOW.

I NEED YOU TO FIX THIS MACHINE.

I CAN TRY...

ITSY

The Microverse.

BITSY

SPIDER

NO. NO SPIDERS HERE. IN THE CRACKS OF THE WORLD JUST ME.

CARNAGE!

I'M GOING TO DIE.

I COULD HAVE REPORTED FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, OR THE POST, BUT NO...I HAD TO GO CHASE *ALIEN PARASITE SERIAL KILLERS* FOR TABLOIDS. AND NOW I'M GOING TO DIE.

ƎTIKƎ ƎTIKƎ

ƎTIKƎ ƎTIKƎ

OH, NO. YOU CAN'T DIE...NOT YET

I STILL NEED YOU, KATY KIERNAN.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND... YOU KILLED EVERYONE.

YOU KILLED EVERYONE AT THE SPACE CEENTER, WHY KEEP ME ALIVE?

YOU'RE A REPORTER. WHAT I'M GOING TO DO HERE, I WANT EVERYONE TO *KNOW*

YOU'RE MY *WITNESS*, BABY! SO YOU HAVE TO *LIVE*.

FOR NOW.

HE'S LICKING HER NOW.

THIS IS THE GREATEST KILLER THE MACROVERSE HAS TO OFFER? HE'S *INSANE*, RAIDUS.

KREVIUS... GO INTO HIS MIND.

...NO. I DO NOT THINK I WOULD LIKE TO DO THAT.

QUIET, ALL OF YOU!

YOU HAVE HIM?

YES, MY LORD. THERE WERE COMPLICATIONS, BUT WE WERE ABLE TO RETRIEVE KASADY AND CROSS THROUGH THE PROMETHUS PIT BACK INTO THE MICROVERSE.

BASE HAS FOUND THE REDEEMER. ONE OF THE UNZONED PLANETS.

WE'RE MAKING OUR WAY TO OUR SHIP NOW.

SIR...THIS HUMAN, HE ***KILLS*** LIKE NOTHING I'VE EVER ***SEEN***, BUT HE'S UNSTABLE. HE'S--

CARNAGE WILL DO HIS JOB, VERUS.

DO YOURS.

"THE PIT IS POWERED..."

...BUT I CAN'T GUARANTEE YOU'RE GOING TO END UP IN THE SAME SPOT AS... AS *HIM*.

THERE'S A SIZE DIFFERENTIAL UPON TRANSIT. YOU PROBABLY WON'T BE CONSCIOUS FOR IT.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, BUT OKAY. ANYTHING ELSE?

YES. I CAN'T GUARANTEE YOU'RE GOING TO SURVIVE THIS AT ALL.

THAT'S JUST GREAT.

HEY. IDIOT.

YOU REALLY THINK HE'S GOING TO COME BACK?

IF I'VE LEARNED ONE THING DOING THIS...THE BAD ONES *ALWAYS* COME BACK.

...RIGHT.

I'M NOT SURE IF THE PIT CAN HANDLE MULTIPLE ENTRANTS IN ITS DAMAGED STATE...

AT THIS POINT, CAN IT REALLY GET ANY WORSE?

I KNOW ANOTHER *IDIOT* WHO TALKS ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY A LOT.

YEAH? I KNOW A *GREAT* MAN WHO DOES THE SAME. READY FOR THIS?

NO.

ME NEITHER.

UHN...

THAT... THAT WAS INTERESTING.

WHERE AM--

OH, MAN. I DON'T THINK YOU'RE IN KANSAS ANYMORE, DOROTHY.

MY NAME IS *FLASH THOMPSON*. AND I THINK...I THINK I'M ON AN ALIEN PLANET.

A REALLY TINY ONE.

THIS IS MAKING MY HEAD HURT.

THIS PLACE IS AMAZING...I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT SOME OF THESE COLORS ARE.

I HAVE TO HOLD IT TOGETHER. HAVE TO KEEP CONTROL. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN THE NASA FACILITY WITH THE SYMBIOTE; IT ALMOST KILLED--

LOOK AT THAT. ALIENS.

UH, HEY. HEY THERE.

THIS IS AMAZING. THIS--

IT BURNS.

YOU CAN TALK! GREAT!

WHAT DO YOU-- EH?

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

THE SYMBIOTE IS SUPPOSED TO BE TAMED, BUT SOMETHING--

CORRUPTER!

HHSSS!

OH, CRAP.

SKREEEEEEEEEEE!

NNEEAARGHHH!

THE PAIN IS LIKE NOTHING I'VE EVER FELT.

AT FIRST, I THINK IT'S ME SCREAMING. IT'S NOT. IT'S THE *SYMBIOTE*.

THE SOUND IS TEARING IT APART.

IT'S TEARING *ME* APART. OH, GOD, MY LEGS...

HAVE TO GET UP... HAVE TO...

GET UP, THOMPSON!

BUT I CAN'T. I'M GOING TO--

SHRACK!

SHOULD LET THEM KILL IT. CORRUPTER.

ENOUGH, FLARE. *THE REDEEMER* WANTS THIS THING, WE GET IT FOR HIM.

BACK OFF ƎTIKE FAERIES!

YOU'RE CALLED VENOM, RIGHT? MY NAME IS *ARCTURUS RANN*. THIS IS MARIONETTE.

WE NEED YOUR HELP.

...OKAY?

UHN...

HATE. EVERYTHING.

HATE IS SELF-DESTRUCTIVE.

I FEEL THE RAGE IN YOU. THE ANGER.

THEY KEEP YOU FROM FULFILLING YOUR POTENTIAL.

...THANKS, YODA.

WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED? WHERE AM I?

AND WHO THE @#$% ARE YOU?

I HAVE NO ANSWERS IN REGARDS TO YOUR JOURNEY HERE.

AS FOR WHO I AM...I AM MANY THINGS. BUT ABOVE ALL ELSE, I AM A MAN.

THANKS FOR CLEARING THAT UP. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

PREPARING.

PREPARING FOR *WHAT?*

TO DIE.

SCREEE!

SCREEEEEEE!

YOU COULD HAVE LED WITH THAT.

VENOM #26

"MINIMUM CARNAGE PART 3: THE MADMAN & THE MICROVERSE"

The Microverse.

THE BODY BANKS HUH?

GOTTA TELL YA... I'M MORE THAN A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED

I EXPECTED, YOU KNOW... BODIES.

THIS IS AN *ANNEX STATION*, CARNAGE.

THERE ARE SIMILAR FLESH FACTORIES...ALL OF THEM DEFUNCT OR UNDER THE CONTROL OF ROGUE SKIN MERCHANTS... SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE ZONES.

ONCE UPON A TIME, THEY CHURNED OUT PERFECT MEN...PERFECT WOMEN... PERFECT BEASTS AND KILLING MACHINES.

SOUNDS SEXY AS HELL.

BUT THERE'LL BE TIME FOR SIGHTSEEING LATER.

YOU BROUGHT ME HERE TO KILL A GUY, RIGHT?

THE REDEEMER HAS BEEN TARGETED FOR DEATH, YES, AND YOU WILL BE THE INSTRUMENT OF HIS DESTRUCTION.

YOU KEEPING NOTES, KATY-GIRL?

A HIGH-AND-MIGHTY RELIGIOUS MUCKETY-MUCK.

MY KIND OF VICTIM.

I'M GONNA KILL A MESSIAH.

THIS EARTH-WOMAN WILL BE NOTHING BUT TROUBLE. WE SHOULD FINISH HER.

OR AT LEAST LET ME WIPE HER MIND AND MOLD HER INTO SOMETHING... USEFUL.

YOU KEEP YOUR PSYCHIC HANKY-PANKY TO YOURSELF

IF ANYBODY'S GONNA DO ANYTHING TO THAT BRAIN OF HERS, IT'S ME.

KATY HERE IS MY BIOGRAPHER.

YOU KNOW WHEN I MENTION YOUR BRAIN, I'M TALKING ABOUT EATING IT, RIGHT?

YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?

THESE... BODY BANKS... IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY WERE BUILT TO RAISE AN ARMY.

WHY DO YOU THINK THEY BROUGHT YOU HERE INSTEAD OF DROPPING YOU RIGHT ON TOP OF THIS REDEEMER GUY?

YOU'RE NO ASSASSIN. NOT TO THEM.

YOU'RE RAW MATERIAL.

SMART PIECE OF MEAT, AREN'T YOU?

YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT.

MUST BE THOSE SLY REPORTER'S INSTINCTS. NOTHING SURPRISES YOU, HUH?

WELL...

I BET YOU'RE SURPRISED BY WHAT I'M GONNA DO NEXT.

CAPTAIN'S LOG. STARDATE BLAH-BLAH-BLAH.

THIS SCIENCE FICTION MUMBO JUMBO WOULD BE RIGHT UP PARKER'S ALLEY.

HE'D ALSO GET A KICK OUT OF SEEING GOOD OL' FLASH THOMPSON STUCK ON A *SPACESHIP* HURTLING THROUGH SOME *MICROSCOPIC ALIEN UNIVERSE.*

ME, I'D GET A KICK OUT OF KNOWING WHETHER OR NOT I'M HITCHING A RIDE...

...OR IF I'M A *PRISONER.*

MY NAME IS *ARCTURUS RANN*, CAPTAIN OF THE *ENDEAVOR* AND LEADER OF THE *ENIGMA FORCE.*

MY COMPANIONS ARE *PRINCESS MARIONETTE*...

...QUARK...

...BUG...

...AND *FLARE.*

AND YOU... YOU'RE THE *CORRUPTER.*

MINIMUM CARNAGE
PART 3: THE MADMAN & THE MICROVERSE

YEAH.

THAT'S WHAT THE REST OF THE *SUGARPLUM FAIRIES* SAID WHEN I GOT DROPPED ON THIS *ROCK.*

I'M CALLED *VENOM.*

I'M HERE--

I DON'T WANT TO KNOW YOUR NAME.

WE DIDN'T SAVE YOU BACK ON TROPICA SO WE COULD TALK. I WANT YOU OUT--

FLARE, ENOUGH.

COME ON, COMMANDER.

PLEASE, DON'T TELL ME WE HAVE TO PLAY NICE WITH THIS... *CREATURE.*

HEY, SOME OF MY BEST PALS ARE ƎTIKƎ CREATURES.

THERE'S NO NEED TO BE ƎTIKƎ RUDE, LITTLE SPRITE.

I THINK FLARE MIGHT DISAGREE, BUG.

OUR *"FRIEND"* VENOM IS MUCH MORE DANGEROUS THAN HE APPEARS.

SOMETHING TELLS ME THAT MAKES TWO OF US, GORGEOUS.

HA! DANGEROUS OR NOT, I ƎTIKƎ *LIKE* HIM.

UUH?

HOLY SHREW!

WHAT WAS *THAT?*

IT FELT LIKE I WAS ET-TIKE ROTTING FROM THE INSIDE OUT!

IMAGINE THAT ON A *PLANETARY* SCALE.

IMAGINE TROPICA...OR YOUR HOME PLANET OF KALIKLAK...OR HOMEWORLD ITSELF BEING CONSUMED BY THAT FORCE.

THAT'S WHY WE HAVE TO GET HIM *OUT* OF THE MICROVERSE.

OUT? WAIT A SECOND.

I CAN'T JUST LEAVE. I HAVE A *FRIEND* WHO'S *LOST* OUT THERE SOMEWHERE.

AND THERE'S A *MONSTER* ON THE LOOSE.

SORRY, BUT YOU *CAN'T* STAY HERE.

THERE'S NO TELLING HOW MUCH REAL DAMAGE YOU MIGHT DO TO THE VERY FABRIC OF OUR REALITY.

IT'S NOT UP TO YOU WHETHER YOU STAY OR GO.

I'M AFRAID IT'S NOT UP TO US, EITHER.

THE REDEEMER WANTS TO SEE HIM.

WHAT?

THAT'S OUR ƎTIKƎ BIG BUDDY, ALWAYS CHANGING HIS MIND!

OKAY. SLOW DOWN.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED? WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?

WE'RE TAKING YOU TO MEET THE ƎTIKƎ BOSS.

WELCOME TO THE CAUSE!

WEE-OOO WEE-OOO WEE-OOO

SAVE THE CHATTER FOR LATER!

EVERYONE STRAP IN OR FIND SOMETHING TO HOLD ONTO!

TWO DOZEN SHIPS FROM *MARQUIS RADU'S* ARMADA!

COMING OUT OF WARP RIGHT IN FRONT OF US!

BATTLE STATIONS!

MY NAME IS KAINE

IN HOUSTON, TEXAS, I'M KNOWN AS THE SCARLET SPIDER.

HERE...WHEREVER HERE IS, I'M KNOWN AS A SNACK!

SKKKKPPPP-OWR!

FOLLOWED A MASS MURDERER NAMED CLETUS KASADY THROUGH THE PROMETHEUS PIT.

(NOT MY IDEA.)

SHRUNK DOWN TO SUB-ATOMIC KIBBLES AND BITS.

SKK-K!

HURLED ACROSS DIMENSIONS TO THIS PINT-SIZED NIGHTMARE.

CH-KUNK! CHUNK!

BACK HOME, THIS THING IS PROBABLY AN AMOEBA OR SOMETHING.

WHUP!

SKKKKPPPRRR

HERE IT'S BIG AND HUNGRY!

HEY!

A LITTLE HELP HERE?!

GUESS NOT.

HRRRRR!

TOO BAD FOR THIS BIG AND TOOTHY BEHEMOTH

SKKKRRCHHK

I HAVE NOT BEATEN DEATH A ZILLION TIMES...

...TO GET EATEN BY AN AMOEBA TODAY!

SHHRRK!

-KKKKRR-

huff... huff...

HEY!
MAYBE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE BECAUSE YOU WERE TOO BUSY *MEDITATING* OR WHATEVER... BUT I JUST SAVED YOUR @ϟϟ!
A LITTLE THANKS MIGHT BE--
COME. SIT DOWN.
LET ME TEND YOUR WOUNDS.

OKAY... I'LL BITE.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
I'VE BEEN CALLED BY MANY NAMES.

I'VE BEEN A KING...A TRAITOR...
I'VE CARRIED THE NAME OF MY PEOPLE. I'VE BEEN CALLED BY THE NAMES OF ENTIRE WORLDS.
BUT NOW... THOSE NAMES ARE *INCONSEQUENTIAL.*

SOME CALL ME THE *REDEEMER*...THE PROPHET. OTHERS, THE SAVIOR. OTHERS, A CONQUEROR.
BUT EVEN THESE NAMES ARE *MEANINGLESS.*
ALL THAT MATTERS IS MY *PURPOSE.*
AND THAT IS?

WHAT-- OH.
I'M A *HEALER.*

I JUST GOTTA KNOW.

HOW'RE Y'ALL FEELING ABOUT THAT MASTER PLAN OF YOURS NOW?

YOU THINK-- WHAT?--YOU CAN GROW YOURSELF AN ARMY OF CARNAGE-SOLDIERS IN THE BODY BANKS?

TRUST ME

ONE OF ME IS PLENTY

THAT GOES FOR YOU, TOO KATY-GIRL.

TRYING TO USE YOUR REPORTER'S TRICKS AND FEMININE WILES TO TURN ME AGAINST MY NEW BUDDIES.

YOU TRY TO POKE MY EMOTIONS WITH A POINTY STICK. *THIS* IS WHAT HAPPENS.

I... I...

SPEECHLESS. I LIKE HER *BETTER* THAT WAY.

NOW... WHERE ARE THE REST OF MY NEW FRIENDS?

NOW!

AW, YEAH! THERE YOU ARE! MAKING A BRAVE LAST STAND!

VREET VREET!

VREET!

I TOLD THE MARQUIS HE WAS UNSTABLE!

FOR A COUPLE OF MICROSCOPIC PEOPLE...

...YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF GUTS

SL-SLK-SSHH!

AGH!

LET'S SEE HOW THEY TASTE.

NNNGGG

NGGEEEAAAGGH!

SLLKGGGKKK!

YOU'RE... DEAD...

ST-STRIP THE CORRUPTER OFF YOUR CARCASS.

B-BREED THEM FROM YOUR CORPSE.

ALL THIS DIRTY TALK IS GETTING ME HOT AND BOTHERED.

WHU--

RRRRPPP!

YEEEARGGGHHH!

NOW...

WH-WHAT DO...YOU WANT WITH ME?

YOU'RE GONNA CHAUFFEUR ME AROUND A BIT WHILE ME AND YOUR BOSS'S CORPSE BECOME BETTER ACQUAINTED.

I FEEL REAL SORE FOR WHAT I HAD TO DO TO YOU.

CONSIDER IT TOUGH LOVE.

AFTER ALL... YOU GUYS ARE JUST PUPPETS...

AND I WANT YOU TO TAKE ME TO THE GUY PULLING THE STRINGS.

MY FIRST STARSHIP DOGFIGHT LASTED MAYBE FORTY-FIVE SECONDS.

THE ENEMY ARMADA CAME IN FAST, RIPPING THROUGH THE SHIP, DISABLING IT, LEAVING IT SPINNING THROUGH SPACE.

WE WERE SITTING DUCKS FOR A *BOARDING PARTY.*

VREET! VREET!

VR-VREET!

SHIELDS AND INERTIAL DAMPENERS SPARED OUR LIVES, TEAM!

WE'VE BEEN GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE! MAKE IT COUNT!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

THE ENIGMA FORCE HAVE BEEN FIGHTING SIDE-BY-SIDE FOR YEARS, AND IT SHOWS.

HIYA, ≡TIKÉ FELLAS!

ARE WE HAVING FUN YET OR WHAT?

ZZZRAKK! RAKK!

THEY FIGHT LIKE MORE THAN THEIR LIVES DEPEND ON IT.

THANKS FOR THE COVER, QUARK!

MY PHYSIOLOGY MAY MARK ME AS A BODY BANKS REJECT...

...BUT THERE ARE SOME BENEFICIAL SIDE EFFECTS!

VREET! VREET! VREE!

THEY FIGHT LIKE THEY *BELIEVE* IN SOMETHING.

I KNOW THE MARQUIS WILL JUST GROW ANOTHER BOARDING PARTY ONCE I CUT THIS ONE DOWN...

...BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT ANY LESS ENJOYABLE!

LIKE *SOLDIERS*. LIKE *BROTHERS*.

SLISH!

LIKE I *USED* TO...

SISLASREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

VREET! VREEET!

AAAGH!

ALL THEIR GUNS... SONIC-BASED WEAPONRY.

EVEN WHEN IT'S NOT CUTTING ME TO RIBBONS, IT THROWS ME OFF MY GAME.

IS EVERYTHING IN THIS PLACE HOMEGROWN TO TEAR ME DOWN?

AAALUGGGHH!

UREEEEET!

HEAD SPINNING... SYMBIOTE REELING IN PAIN...

...REACTING ON PURE INSTINCT...

DALLAN AND SEPSIS!

YEEEEEEEAUAAUARRRRGGGH!

...TURN YOU INSIDE OUT...

...RIP YOU APART...

...SHRED THE ENTIRE MICROVERSE!

"OUR UNIVERSE HAS BEEN PLAGUED BY ENDLESS HOSTILITY."

WAR. GENOCIDE. ONE MISGUIDED TYRANT AFTER ANOTHER.

I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK THAT MAKES YOU *SPECIAL*. BECAUSE YOU KNOW WHO ELSE IS PLAGUED WITH ENDLESS BLOODSHED?

EVERYBODY.

AND IF YOU THINK YOU CAN CHANGE *THAT*...WELL, I HATE TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT YOU'RE CHASING A *PIPE DREAM*.

FOR SO LONG, I LIVED BY THE *SWORD* AS A *WARRIOR-BORN*.

I CRUSHED COUNTLESS ENEMIES...LOSING MY FAMILY, MY PEOPLE, AND MY HOME IN THE PROCESS...AND YET NEW ADVERSARIES ALWAYS SURFACED.

IT WAS ONLY WHEN I OPENED MYSELF UP TO THE *ENIGMA FORCE*...THE *ESSENCE* OF THE MICROVERSE...THAT I REALIZED I WAS NOT MEANT TO WARRIOR.

AND I KNEW THAT IF I COULD CHANGE, THEN SO COULD THE UNIVERSE.

THE MICROVERSE IS AT WAR ONCE AGAIN, YES, BESET BY A STUDENT AND FOLLOWER OF ONE OF THE MOST VILE CONQUERORS WHO EVER LIVED.

MARQUIS RADU IS HERE, AND I'VE COME TO FIND HIM.

I'VE COME TO *HEAL* HIM.

THAT'S A *SWEET* IDEA... REALLY TOUCHING.

SOUNDS LIKE YOU AND ME ARE BOTH LOOKING FOR THE SAME GUY

ONLY YOUR PLANS SOUND *BORING* AS HELL...AND MINE SOUND LIKE A LOT OF *FUN!*

CARNAGE!

BET YOU WISH YOU HAD THAT **SWORD** YOU MENTIONED RIGHT ABOUT NOW, HUH, **MIRACLE MAN?**

DON'T YOU WORRY NONE

HOLD REAL STILL AND I'LL MAKE THIS AS SLOW AND AGONIZING AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE!

SCARLET SPIDER #11
"MINIMUM CARNAGE PART 4: KILL CARNAGE"

CAN'T THINK. HEALER...DID SOMETHING TO ME.

MIND ON FIRE, BUT MORE... MY SOUL.

BUT IF I HAVE A SOUL AT ALL...

...IT'S THE SOUL OF A MONSTER.

I WAS KAINE. A MAN WHO KILLED INDISCRIMINATELY.

A MURDERER.

LIFE HAD NO MEANING TO ME UNTIL I DIED.

NOW, I'VE BEEN GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE.

I'M BEING SHOWN A BETTER PATH.

A BETTER WAY... THE WAY OF THE SCARLET SPIDER.

BUT NO MATTER HOW MUCH I TRY TO BE THAT BETTER MAN, DESPITE ANY NEWFOUND RESPECT FOR LIFE...

...THAT MONSTER IS STILL INSIDE OF ME.

AND RIGHT NOW, IT'S TELLING ME ONE THING.

KILL CARNAGE!

MINIMUM CARNAGE

PART 4: KILL CARNAGE

STAY STILL! IT'S GOING TO HURT MORE IF YOU KEEP MOVING LIKE THIS!

ON SECOND THOUGHT MOVE!

I'M GOING TO SEND YOU TO HELL, KASADY!

HIT!

CRACK!

HELL? THAT'S NOT A PLACE YOU GO

IT'S A PLACE YOU MAKE.

NYEARGH!

YOU START BY FINDING A PLACE

THEN YOU KILL EVERYONE IN IT

CORRUPTER.

The Homeworld Microship Endeavor.

"SHOOT 3TIKE IT!"

Bug.

Quark.

Arcturus Rann.

THOUGHT THIS THING WAS ON OUR SIDE!

Marionette.

BRIGHT SIDE? AT LEAST IT'S 3TIKE KILLING THE BAD GUYS, TOO.

MY NAME IS *FLASH THOMPSON*, AGENT *VENOM*. AND I'M IN A MICROSCOPIC UNIVERSE HUNTING DOWN A KILLER.

THESE PEOPLE, THESE MICRONS... THEY SAVED MY LIFE...

...AND I'M GOING TO SLAUGHTER THEM FOR IT.

THE SYMBIOTE IS OUT OF CONTROL. THIS PLACE, THIS MICROVERSE...IT'S AFFECTING IT SOMEHOW.

MARI, QUARK... DON'T KILL IT! THE REDEEMER WANTS IT ALIVE!

JUST WOUND THE HECK OUT OF IT!

THIS PLACE IS MAKING IT *INSANE.*

DIDN'T THINK THAT COULD HAPPEN. NOW IT'S HAPPENED TWICE. IN ONE DAY.

BEFORE WITH THE *OTHER* SPIDER-MAN... WITH SCARLET SPIDER, I GOT CONTROL BACK AND STOPPED IT.

BUT THIS...THIS IS *DIFFERENT.*

MY MIND IS SCATTERED, UNFOCUSED. THE SYMBIOTE, IT'S NOT THINKING. IT'S FEELING.

HATE.

RAGE.

HUNGER.

I CAN'T STOP IT, I CAN'T--NO.

DON'T YOU GIVE UP, THOMPSON, DO YOU HEAR ME?! DON'T YOU GIVE--

...

IS SOMEBODY *SINGING?*

Flare.

THE FAERIE.

OF ALL OF THEM, SHE HATED ME. HER KIND, THEY WERE GOING TO KILL ME.

BUT HER SONG, BEFORE WHERE IT TORE THE SYMBIOTE APART, NOW...

...NOW, THE SOUND IS *SOOTHING* IT.

WHAT THE ∃TIKE HELL?

FLARE?

WHAT?! I STILL THINK WE SHOULD HAVE KILLED THE @#$%&*$ THING.

DON'T YOU MOVE. DON'T TAKE ANOTHER STEP.

I WON'T.

AND THAT'S THE TRUTH. I CAN BARELY STAND.

ABOUT FIVE SECONDS FROM PASSING OUT, JUST NEED TIME TO GET IT TOGETHER; I JUST NEED TIME TO--

BREE! BREE! BREE! BREE! BREE!

WARNING! NEW CONTACT INCOMING!

THIS IS JUST NOT OUR DAY.

KRAKOOM

EVERYTHING IS SHAKING. WE JUST TOOK A HIT AND--

AND THEN I REMEMBER WE'RE IN SPACE.

GOING TO DIE.

CAN'T MOVE. CAN'T GET UP.

MARI, GET TO THE BRIDGE, WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!

QUARK, BUG--

KRAKOOM

I WONDER WHERE YOU GO WHEN YOU DIE IN THE MICROVERSE?

MICRO-HEAVEN. HA.

I THINK OF BETTY.

SHLIK!

GHH... HA... HAHAHAHA...

MORE

MORE!

SHUNK!

COME ON!

COME ON!

HAHA HAHA!

AAAHH!

OH, SWEET LORD. WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE. WE HAVE TO--

WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU GOING?!

I DO NOT INTEND TO DIE BY THAT MONSTER'S HANDS.

GET! OFF!

REMEMBER.

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE.

KILL YOU!

I'M GONNA KILL YOU, YOU SON OF A

AAAAAHHHH!

OHCRAP OHCRAPOH CRAP...

HEY... *HEY!* ARE YOU OKAY?!

THE CORRUPTER... HIS CANCER SPREADS.

WHAT?!

EVERYTHING... FALLS APART.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

MOVE.

UHN!

NO.

NO!

NO...

YEAH, DIDN'T SEE THAT COMING, EITHER, KATY-BABY

HE WAS FUN. WHAT AM I GOING TO DO NOW?

CLETUS KASADY!

AHH!

PAF!

STAND DOWN BY THE WORD OF MARQUIS RADU!

WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID?

YOU KILLED MY ENTIRE TEAM.

...

TAKE THEM TO THE MARQUIS.

NOT YET

"HOW LONG WAS I OUT?"

NOT LONG ENOUGH.

THEY WOKE YOU UP FOR THE WORST PART. THE PART WHERE MARQUIS RADU KILLS US ALL.

THIS RADU OF YOURS IS THAT BAD, HUH?

I'VE SEEN BAD IN MY TIME.

HE'S TRYING TO KILL *GOD*.

IS THAT SOME KIND OF EUPHEMISM?

IT IS NOT.

BUT A SYMBIOTE DOES NOT *BELIEVE* IN SUCH THINGS, *DOES* IT?

A SYMBIOTE ONLY *CONSUMES*. AND I WOULD HAVE YOU *CONSUME* A *GOD* FOR ME.

OHHHHH, BOY.

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?

THIS IS US BEING TOTALLY ƎTIKIƎ SCREWED.

THIS IS MY WORLD, SYMBIOTE. MY UNIVERSE.

AND I WILL NOT SHARE IT WITH *ANYONE*, NOT EVEN A *GOD*.

YOU'VE LOST, RADU. THE REDEEMER IS STILL FREE, FAR FROM YOUR GRASP.

PLEASE, COMMANDER RANN. YOUR LIMITED MIND CANNOT BEGIN TO IMAGINE MY GRASP.

I'VE DEFEATED YOU, I'VE PUSHED BACK THE *PSYCHO-MAN*, I BATTLED *LORD GOULDAR*, I'VE CRUSHED COUNTLESS ARMIES AND MONSTERS...

AND NOW I HAVE *THIS*.

GET OFF ME!

I WAS SURPRISED WHEN MY MEN TOLD ME THEY'D FOUND A *SECOND* SYMBIOTE IN THE MICROVERSE.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

AFTER ALL, I'D ONLY ORDERED *ONE*.

HAIL, MARQUIS RADU!

HAIL, HAIL, HAIL *MARQUIS MARK 50* FANCY

THIS IS GOING TO MAKE KILLING YOU ALL SO MUCH EASIER.

HT--!

SHUNK!

SHUNK!

TT--!

YOU...WANT ME TO KILL FOR YOU?

NOTHING WOULD MAKE ME HAPPIER!

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT...

I AM NOT INTERESTED IN YOUR *HAPPINESS.*

KHOOM!

PUT COMMANDER RANN AND HIS "ENIGMA FORCE" IN HOLDING CELLS.

TAKE THE SYMBIOTES TO THE BANKS.

KATY! KATY!

VENOM!

MISS KIERNAN, IS IT? RAIDUS TELLS ME YOU'RE A HISTORIAN FROM THE MACROVERSE.

I...

SURE, WHY NOT?

COME, THEN. WALK WITH ME.

ARE YOU GOING TO KILL ME?

SHOULD I? ARE YOU A THREAT TO ME?

I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW.

NOR I. I HAVE NO INTEREST IN SENSELESS SLAUGHTER, MISS KIERNAN.

SO YOUR SLAUGHTER MAKES SENSE?

OH, YES.

THE MICROVERSE, AS YOU CALL IT, HAS ALWAYS BEEN CHAOS. WAR.

OVERSEEN BY A MAD GOD.

I INTEND TO END THAT.

WITH A SERIAL KILLER? ARE YOU SURE IT'S THE GOD THAT'S MAD?

YES. I AM.

AAH!

LET ME SHOW YOU.

OH, GOD.

"UNLIKE YOURS, OUR UNIVERSE IS *LIMITED*.

"WE EXIST WITHIN YOU, BUT WE ARE SO MUCH *MORE*. WE ARE HELD BACK FROM OUR POTENTIAL BY THE ALMIGHTY.

"BY THE *ENIGMA FORCE*.

"BUT ONCE, THE MICROVERSE WAS BREACHED BY THE CREATURES WE NOW CALL *SYMBIOTES*.

"AND THEY BEGAN TO *CONSUME* US.

"THEY WERE *POISON* TO OUR UNIVERSE, THEIR MERE PRESENCE ENOUGH TO *BREAK* IT DOWN.

"THE SYMBIOTES VERY NEARLY *DESTROYED* US...

"...AND THEY VERY NEARLY DESTROYED THE ENIGMA FORCE *ITSELF*. THE SYMBIOTES ATTEMPTED TO BOND WITH *GOD*. TO *CONSUME* IT.

"IN THE END, THE ENIGMA FORCE DESTROYED THE MINDLESS BEASTS, *EXPELLING* THEM FROM THE MICROVERSE."

UHN!

WHY... WHY WOULD YOU BRING THEM BACK?

BECAUSE I WANT TO BE *GOD*.

AND IN ORDER FOR ME TO BE THE NEW GOD, I HAVE TO *KILL* THE OLD ONE.

BUT I CAN'T. *IT IS* AGAINST MY *RELIGION*.

THUS... *CARNAGE*.

The Obsidian Wastelands, Unzoned.

HNF.

THAT...

...WAS A TERRIBLE IDEA.

YOU OKAY?

I AM *DYING.*

...BEYOND THAT, YOU OKAY?

THE SYMBIOTES. THEY ARE *ANATHEMA* TO THE ENIGMA FORCE. POISON. CANCER.

AND I AM THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF THAT *FORCE.*

SO, WHAT? CARNAGE IS GOING TO *KILL* YOU?

IF THE ENIGMA FORCE DIES, THE *MICROVERSE* DIES.

THAT SOUNDS...LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO BE INSENSITIVE HERE, BUT UNTIL A FEW HOURS AGO I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ALL THIS EXISTED. CAN'T WE JUST LEAVE?

YOU MISUNDERSTAND. THIS PLACE...NOTHING CAN *EXIST* WITHOUT IT. THE MICROVERSE *HOLDS* THE MACROVERSE *TOGETHER.*

YOUR UNIVERSE.

...

CRAP.

YES.

CRAP INDEED.

"I'M GOING TO KILL HIM."

AND HIM. AND THAT ONE OVER THERE. AND--

IS IT A PICTURE OF SOMEONE DYING?

FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE, KASADY, WILL YOU LISTEN?

THERE'S A BIGGER PICTURE GOING ON HERE.

YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME, YOU--

--WHOA.

RADU. HE'S BUILDING AN ARMY, BUT WHY BRING US TO--

OH, CRAP--

THOMPSON, YOU IDIOT!

HE'S BUILDING AN ARMY OUT OF *US*.

VENOM #27

"MINIMUM CARNAGE PART 5: FAMILY BONDAGE"

An Unzoned Planet in the Microverse.

MARQUIS RADU'S MOBILE FORTRESS.

SO YOUR PLAN, IF I UNDERSTAND YOU CORRECTLY, IS TO USE *CARNAGE* TO... *INFECT* THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE...

...AND SOMEHOW KILL NOT ONLY THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF THE *MICROVERSE*, BUT ALSO THE SPIRITUAL *POWER* THAT BINDS BASICALLY EVERYTHING TOGETHER.

THE *ENIGMA FORCE*, MS. KIERNAN.

THROUGH THE INFLUENCE OF THE *CORRUPTORS*, IT WILL BE DESTROYED... AND REKINDLED UNDER MY CONTROL.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW *INSANE* THAT SOUNDS?

AND WHY TELL *ME* ANY OF THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE?

BECAUSE YOUR UNIVERSE...THE *MACROVERSE*... IS *NEXT*.

AND AS A REPORTER OF YOUR WORLD'S EVENTS, YOU SHALL BE THE INSTRUMENT OF MY UNDERSTANDING.

OH, SURE. WHY NOT? LET ME START BY TELLING YOU HOW TO GET THERE.

START OUT BY TAKING A RIGHT HAND TURN ON "GO @#$% YOURSELF" AVENUE...THEN GO STRAIGHT DOWN "*SHOVE IT UP YOUR @$$*" LANE!

THERE IS NO NEED FOR FURTHER DISCOURSE.

WE'LL SPEAK AGAIN...*AFTER* YOU'VE SPENT SOME TIME IN A CELL.

BUT YOUR ANGER AND INDIGNATION WILL SERVE YOU WELL, EARTHER.

"IT WILL HELP YOU COPE WITH THE UTTER *DESTRUCTION* OF ALL YOU HOLD DEAR."

THE SYMBIOTE *INVASION* OF THE MICROVERSE TOOK PLACE THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO...BUT I CAN *SEE* IT IN MY MIND'S EYE...

...PLAYING OUT LIKE IT HAPPENED YESTERDAY...LIKE I WAS *THERE*...

SOME SORT OF CELLULAR MEMORY.

NO. NOT A MEMORY.

A HARDWIRED DREAM...A *HOPE*...

ENTIRE PLANETS PLAYED *HOST* TO SYMBIOTES.

THE MICROVERSE FOUND A WAY TO EXPEL THE INVADERS...BUT IT WAS NEARLY WIPED OUT IN THE PROCESS.

THE SYMBIOTES ALMOST *MURDERED* THE UNIVERSE...

AND CARNAGE AND ME...WE BROUGHT THEM BACK.

RRREEEAAAAAGGGHHH!

WHAT'S WRONG, DADDIO?

HURTS, DOESN'T IT?

YOU SHOULD JUST COWBOY UP, THOUGH, AND RIDE THE AGONY WAVE

IT'LL BE OVER SOON!

IT'LL ALL BE OVER...BUT THE BLOODY SLAUGHTER!

THE BODY BANKS.

A MEAT SHOP...GENETIC ENGINEERING ON A FACTORY SCALE...A NIGHTMARE OF METAL AND SKIN...SWEAT AND OIL...BONE AND STEEL...

...FUELED BY MY FLESH...BY VENOM'S FLESH...

MARQUIS RADU IS TRYING TO BREED AN *ARMY*...AN ARMY OF SYMBIOTE HOSTS.

I CAN FEEL THE POTENTIAL HOSTS *DYING*.

RAPID-FIRE *NECROSIS* ROTTING THEIR FLESH WHERE THE SYMBIOTES CONTAMINATE THEM.

CLONED SYMBIOTES EATING THEM.

GOD HELP ME, I'M KILLING THEM!

YES!

EVERYTHING IN THE MICROVERSE IS PART OF THE SAME LIVING, BREATHING MACHINE.

EVERY CREATURE. EVERY PIECE OF EQUIPMENT.

CONNECTED.

THE SYMBIOTES... THE CORRUPTORS... DESTROY IT ALL...LIKE A LIVING CANCER.

IN SECONDS, METAL RESTRAINTS CORRODE TO THE CONSISTENCY OF SPONGE CAKE.

FEEL LIKE I'VE GONE THROUGH A 72-HORROR MAX INTENSITY WORKOUT.

MUSCLES ARE WATERY.

BUT I'M FREE.

GREAT.

NOW WHAT?

ON YOUR FEET, OLD MAN!

SHOW SOME PRIDE!

OUR BABIES ARE ALL GROWN UP!

MINIMUM CARNAGE
PART 5: FAMILY BONDAGE

ONLY... WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANY... YOUTHFUL REBELLION... NOT LIKE YOU HAD WITH ME...

THESE HYBRIDS ARE LESS OFFSPRING AND MORE... EXTENSIONS.

AND THEY'RE BRED TO OBEY!

MAMA'S BRUTAL LITTLE DARLINGS ARE SO EAGER TO PLEASE!

CLONED SYMBIOTES... HYBRIDS OF VENOM AND CARNAGE. REAL *NASTY* BUSINESS.

SO...OF COURSE, CARNAGE HAS SOME SORT OF *INFLUENCE* OVER THEM.

THEY'RE ATTACK DOGS WAITING FOR HIS COMMAND.

WHUD

THE ARMY DOESN'T WAIT. GOTTA PUT CARNAGE DOWN BEFORE IT GETS *WORSE*.

SLAM

SO...OUR INCESTUOUS LITTLE FAMILY IS GONNA FIGHT, HUH?

THAT'S A REAL *SHAME*

IT'S ALWAYS SAD WHEN CHILDREN HAVE TO PICK A SIDE IN A PARENTAL DISAGREEMENT

SIC 'EM, KIDS!

"ALL RIGHT..."

...SO WHAT HAPPENS TO US NOW?

I'M NOT SURE ƎTIKƎ YOU'RE GONNA WANT TO KNOW, BUT I'LL TELL YA ƎTIKƎ ANYHOW.

YOU'LL PROBABLY COOL YOUR HEELS IN ƎTIKƎ HERE WITH US...UNTIL YOU DECIDE TO COOPERATE OR WE'RE ALL ƎTIKƎ **EXECUTED.**

AFTER THAT, BARON RADU WILL MOST LIKELY ƎTIKƎ HARVEST YOUR **BRAIN** AND CLONE IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN UNTIL HE COOKS UP ONE WITH A MORE **AGREEABLE** ATTITUDE.

I GOTTA SAY...AS A VACATION DESTINATION...

...THE MICROVERSE ***SUCKS.***

GUESS IT'S A GOOD THING THOSE GUARDS WERE SO ***HANDY.***

GAVE ME A CHANCE TO POCKET--

--THIS.

A SONIC KEY!

YOU'RE A THIEF AFTER MY OWN HEART!

BRRR-UREEET!
BRRR-UREEET!
BRRR-UREEET!

WONDER IF THAT'S GOOD NEWS FOR US OR ƎTIKƎ BAD.

WHATEVER IT MEANS, THAT'S THE SIGNAL FOR YOU TWO TO STOP ***FLIRTING...***

...AND FOR THE REST OF US TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

"WHAT'S WRONG DADDY?"

JEALOUS?

FEELING... INEPT...IMPOTENT... BECAUSE OUR UGLY LITTLE BABIES WOULD RATHER LISTEN TO ME THAN YOU?

HE'S *RIGHT*. I KNOW IT.

I CAN HEAR HYBRIDS IN MY HEAD...DISTANT MAYBE...BUT THEY'RE WITH ME...

...A THOUSAND SCREAMING VOICES...

BUT I CAN'T SCREAM BACK... OR AT LEAST THEY WON'T LISTEN...

CARNAGE IS *PURE*...

...UNTAINTED BY SCIENTIFIC TAMPERING...

...UNHINDERED BY SO MUCH AS A SHRED OF HUMANITY...

SEEING YOU LIKE THIS...A SLAVE TO THE FAT CATS AND THE PIGS...

...IT MAKES ME WANT TO THROW UP WHOEVER I HAD FOR LUNCH.

MY SYMBIOTE, THOUGH, IS *CRIPPLED*.

AND IF I WANT TO STOP CARNAGE...THEN I--FLASH THOMPSON--HAVE TO THINK LIKE CARNAGE.

I HAVE TO THINK *MEAN*.

I CAN DO MEAN.

SQUEEEEEE

SKRRRGGGLKKK!

WANTED TO PULL MY PUNCH...AT THE LAST SECOND.

ALMOST FLINCHED.

ALMOST.

CAME HERE TO TAKE DOWN A LUNATIC, AND THAT'S WHAT I--

SQUUUEEEE-EH-HEH-HEH-HEH-HEH

AW, HELL NO--

NICE TRY.

...ESPECIALLY FOR A FRAT BOY WHO'S ESSENTIALLY WEARING A CORPSE LIKE A HALLOWEEN COSTUME!

I ALWAYS HAD A YEN TO KILL MY DADDY.

EVEN IF I HADN'T PICKED THOSE DESIRES UP FROM MY HOST IT'S PART OF MY SYMBIOTE HERITAGE.

BUT NOW...SEEING HOW HARD YOU'RE TRYING...SEEING HOW PATHETIC YOU ARE...

SLIKKK!

REAAGGH!

NOW... THIS IS A MERCY KILLING.

HHT!

CHGGNK!

GUESS I'M GETTING SOFT IN MY OLD AGE.

HE'S TRIPPING ON A SUDDEN SURGE OF ADRENALINE. I CAN SENSE IT. I CAN SMELL IT.

NOT SURE I CAN PUT HIM DOWN...NOT WHEN HE'S 'ROIDED UP LIKE THIS...

CARNAGE!

HNH?

LET'S GO. ROUND THREE.

HRRRK!

GGHNNK!

SCARLET SPIDER. THE SPIDER-MAN FROM TEXAS.

DON'T LIKE HIM MUCH...BUT I'M GLAD TO SEE HIM.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.

YOU'RE LUCKY I'M NOT.

CHEAP SHOT, SPIDER.

BUT IF YOU WANNA PLAY DIRTY, I'M YOUR HUCKLEBERRY.

THE CORRUPTOR GROWS STRONGER...

...FEEDING ON THE ESSENCE OF THE MICROVERSE...

HSSSSSSS

...AND SOON HE'LL BRING BOTH OF OUR WORLDS CRASHING DOWN AROUND HIM.

WHO'S YOUR FRIEND, SPIDER?

HSSSSSSS

VENOM, MEET THE REDEEMER.

HE'S A WEALTH OF GOOD NEWS...

"...AND THIS IS THE KIND OF NEWS THAT SPREADS FAST!"

ENIGMA FORCE! PUNCH A HOLE THROUGH THESE THINGS!

WE HAVE TO FIND THE SOURCE OF THIS INFESTATION... AND DESTROY IT!

THAT'S TOO BAD! THESE SPIKE BEASTIES SEEM TO LIKE THE TASTE OF MARQUIS RADU'S FOOT SOLDIERS!

THAT MAY BE, BUG, BUT THEY'LL LAY WASTE TO THE LIFE FORCE THAT HOLDS OUR WORLD TOGETHER!

SSSSLASHREEEE

I KIND OF HATE THE ƎTIKƎ IDEA OF LEAVING THE OTHERS BEHIND!

SO DO I, BUG, BUT THE CORRUPTORS ARE SPAWNING OUT OF CONTROL.

I DON'T EVEN LIKE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF WE CAN'T STOP THEM!

FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS--

--IT MIGHT BE *TOO LATE* ALREADY.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE AS LONG AS WE'RE ALIVE.

STAY BEHIND US AND KEEP YOUR HEAD--

MARQUIS RADU!

AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S HAVING AS MUCH ƎTIKƎ TROUBLE WITH THESE FLESHY NIGHTMARES AS WE ARE!

THE ENIGMA FORCE!

YOU ARRIVE...AS YOU ALWAYS DO... AT THE MOST INOPPORTUNE TIME.

BUT...IF YOU WAIT YOUR TURN PATIENTLY... I'LL MAKE YOUR ENDINGS... *PLEASURABLE* FOR YOU.

YOU BROUGHT ABOUT THIS *CHAOS!*

YOU *DESERVE* TO SEE EVERYTHING YOU'VE WORKED FOR FALL *APART!*

BUT YOU DESERVE *DEATH* EVEN MORE!

FOOLS! HAVE YOU LEARNED *NOTHING?*

DISORDER IS THE *NATURAL STATE* OF THE MICROVERSE!

I AM THE *AVATAR* OF CHAOS!

YOU CANNOT HOPE TO *KILL* ME!

WATCH OUT!

VR-THOOM!

WHILE YOUR PRECIOUS *ENIGMA FORCE* WILL BE NAUGHT BUT ANOTHER *VICTIM* OF MY *MACHINATIONS!*

HE'S RUNNING! TELEPORTING!

NO!

VREET! VR-VREET!

HSSSKKKK

WELL... DON'T BE TOO DISAPPOINTED, XENA.

HSSSKKKK

HSSSKKKK

"IT LOOKS LIKE HE LEFT US SOME *PARTING GIFTS.*"

WE BEAT THEM DOWN, BUT THEY JUST KEEP COMING.

I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE...*LOST CAUSES*...LOSING BATTLES...

NO WAY OUT.

A FAKE SPIDER-MAN AND A HALF-ASSED VENOM.

MUST BE BARGAIN BASEMENT DAY AT SLAUGHTERPALOOZA!

THE... CORRUPTION... *SPREADING*...

NO TIME...

IF THE MICROVERSE DIES...THE MACROVERSE... COLLAPSES.

YOU HEAR THAT, VENOM?

WE'RE PLAYING FOR KEEPS!

WE HAVE TO--

QUIET!

THE *REAL* SPIDER'S MOUTHY. BUT THAT'S *ENOUGH* OUT OF YOU!

MMMPH!

THE UNIVERSE... BREAKING DOWN...

I SAW THIS HAPPEN...

YOU'RE HERE TO...SAVE BOTH OUR WORLDS...

JUST SQUEEZE YOUR EYES SHUT, DAD!

I'LL MAKE THIS QUICK!

CAN'T WIN THIS... CAN'T BEAT HIM... NOT ALONE. I NEED...

...I NEED *VENOM.*

BUT IT'S LIKE TRYING TO GRAB HOLD OF NIGHTMARE FRAGMENTS THAT ARE FADING FROM YOUR MEMORY.

LIKE TRYING TO STAND UP AND GET OUT OF A HOSPITAL BED BECAUSE YOU FORGOT YOU DON'T HAVE LEGS.

LIKE TRYING TO BE BRAVE WHEN YOUR FATHER JUST... KEEPS...HITTING YOU.

VENOM'S *GONE.*

LIKE CARNAGE SAID...I MIGHT AS WELL BE BONDED TO A CORPSE.

GET OFF ME!

RUUU

VENOM!

YOU WERE BROUGHT HERE TO SAVE OUR WORLDS!

YOU WERE BROUGHT HERE TO PURGE THE CORRUPTORS!

DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT.

I CAME HERE TO CATCH A KILLER...TO SAVE A FRIEND...TO STOP A MONSTER.

IF I COULD CONTROL THE HYBRIDS, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE A PLAY.

BUT...WITHOUT VENOM...I CAN'T. AND I DON'T...

...REMEMBER.

REMEMBER THOSE BEATINGS...THE BRUISES...THE BROKEN BONES.

REMEMBER THE PHANTOM PAIN... LEGS ITCHING EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE GONE.

REMEMBER WHAT IT FELT LIKE... BEING TRAPPED INSIDE...WHILE THE SYMBIOTE KILLED.

KREEEAAAANGGHHHHH

SSSUUUUEERRRRRKKKK

SSSUUUU

REMEMBER HOW THOSE THINGS MADE YOU *DIE* INSIDE...LITTLE BY LITTLE...

UEERRRR

SHOW THE HYBRIDS HOW THAT FEELS.

ƎTIKƎ

KKKKKK

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE.

SYMBIOTE.

AND THEN... ONCE THIS IS OVER...ONCE THE JOB IS DONE... FORCE ALL THAT @#$% BACK DOWN AGAIN.

HNNNNN

HEH-HEH-H-HEH.

YOU MUST BE REAL PROUD OF YOURSELF.

YOU THINK YOU SAVED THE DAY? YOU THINK YOU STOPPED ME?

I'M NOT EVEN WARMED UP.

CARNAGE... SINKING INTO THE FLOOR...SINKING *THROUGH* THE FLOOR...

GETTING AWAY.

AH-HAHAHA HA!

NO!

HE'S *GONE.*

WHETHER HE WAS EXPELLED BY THE ENIGMA FORCE OR SLIPPED OUT OF OUR UNIVERSE ON HIS OWN, I CANNOT BE SURE.

BUT I CAN NO LONGER SENSE HIM.

THERE IS ONLY ONE CORRUPTOR AMONG US NOW.

THAT'S TERRIFIC. IF CARNAGE ISN'T HERE...

"...THEN WHERE THE HELL IS HE?"

Houston, Texas.

MINIMUM CARNAGE: OMEGA

Houston, Texas.

DAILY INQUISITOR

Stories like this don't always have a happy ending.

In this business, though, happy endings don't push papers.

Happy endings aren't seen as important, especially when they unfold in another part of the country…another part of the world…

…or another universe altogether.

Two heroes from our world save another dimension from collapse, and nobody bats an eye.

Life goes on.

We're all too busy to worry about something as trivial as a "happy" ending.

After all, if it bleeds it leads.

RRNN

ARNIE? ARE YOU FEELING OKAY, DEAR?

SOMEBODY--

SOMEBODY HELP! MY HUSBAND'S HAVING A--

But don't worry.

This story bleeds.

BLARRRGGHHH!

A-ARNIE?

Two super heroes from our world traveled to a microscopic universe... inner space...to stop a maniac bent on wholesale slaughter.

They succeeded.

MINIMUM CARNAGE OMEGA

But saving an entire universe meant putting our world in harm's way.

Because Carnage came back.

He returned out of control.

And he brought an army with him.

AH...HOME SWEET HOME! I HATE BEING BACK ALREADY!

I HOPE YOU MEWLING BAGS OF GUTS ARE UP FOR A LITTLE OLD-FASHIONED SLICE-AND-DICE...

...AND RIP...

...AND EVISCERATE...

DON'T BLAME ME

I WANTED TO BE DONE WITH THIS WORLD I WANTED TO BE FINISHED WITH ALL OF YOU.

I WAS GONNA BE A GOD

BUT I GUESS I'LL SETTLE FOR BEING THE APOCALYPSE!

And that is headline-worthy.

The Microverse.

APPROACHING THE SPACEWALL.

I'd like to say we helped the Enigma Force win their war and free their universe.

The truth is we barely made it through what will go down in their history books as a minor confrontation in a much more devastating conflict.

Marquis Radu…a mad scientist turned despot…is still at large. The Enigma Force would still be fighting long after we were gone.

But they really wanted us gone.

Agent Venom's alien symbiote "partner" was actually causing the fabric of the Microverse to come undone.

Quark

Redeemer

Scarlet Spider

Agent Venom

Katy Kiernan

Commander Rann

Flare

Bug

Mari

COMMANDER... THIS IS AS CLOSE AS WE CAN GET WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT UP IN ONE OF THOSE COSMIC FLARES.

SPEED TO NULL, MARI.

I DON'T THINK THIS SHIP'S BUFFERS CAN HANDLE *ANY MORE* DISTRESS.

THIS CLOSE TO THE *SPACEWALL*, THE VEIL BETWEEN OUR UNIVERSES IS AT ITS *WEAKEST*.

IT'S *TIME*.

We could tell Venom was fighting to keep his corruptive nature in check, but we knew it wouldn't last.

YEAH.

IF YOU GUYS ARE ΞTIKE LEAVING, THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO HOME, BUT YOU CAN'T ΞTIKE STAY HERE!

I GATHERED UP A FEW OF OUR *SONICS* FOR YOU. HOPEFULLY, THESE WEAPONS WILL BE HELPFUL AGAINST *CARNAGE*.

UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU'RE THINKING OF VISITING AGAIN.

IN WHICH CASE, JUST USE THEM ON *YOURSELF*.

GEE... THANKS...

BE CAREFUL WITH THAT *DISRUPTOR*.

IF YOU'RE CAUGHT IN ITS *BLAST RADIUS*, IT'S DOUBTFUL YOU'LL *SURVIVE*.

SO... YEAH...

...THANKS FOR THE FORTUNE COOKIE WISDOM AND CONSTANT THREAT OF DEATH.

YOU ARE WELCOME.

I WOULD WISH YOU *LUCK*, BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT IS NOT IN *YOUR* FUTURE.

JUST SO YA ∃TIKE KNOW, KATY K....I MANAGE TO POP INTO THE MACROVERSE FROM TIME TO ∃TIKE TIME.

MAYBE I'LL LOOK YA UP?

SOUNDS LIKE FUN.

BUT *CALL* FIRST, OKAY?

YOU SAID THE SYMBIOTE COULD SEND US BACK TO OUR WORLD.

BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO MAKE IT WORK. I CAN'T. JUST--

YOU DO NOT NEED TO *FORCE* THE CORRUPTOR TO DO YOUR BIDDING.

YOU ARE ONE AND THE SAME.

WHETHER YOU REALIZE IT OR NOT, IT *WANTS* WHAT *YOU* WANT.

And…just like that…we faded out of the Microverse.

It was as simple as slipping under the surface of a calm lake…

…and sinking into another **reality**.

WHAT THE HELL?

THIS PROBABLY IS HELL.

LORD KNOWS WE *DESERVE* IT.

YOU GOT ME INTO THIS, SHOULDERPADS. THIS IS YOUR *FAULT*.

JUST IN CASE WE SPEND ETERNITY *HERE*, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT.

DON'T GET TOO EXCITED.

THIS IS GONNA GET *WORSE*.

SOMETHING HAPPENED IN THE BODY BANKS…

…I CAN *SENSE* HIM…SENSE CARNAGE…

…IT'S LIKE WE'RE *ATTUNED*… CONNECTED…

YOU'RE… *CONNECTED*… TO THAT *FREAK*?

TRUST ME… I LIKE THE IDEA EVEN *LESS* THAN YOU DO.

BUT THAT'S HOW IT IS.

I CAN *FOLLOW* HIM… FOLLOW THE PATH HE TOOK THROUGH THE SPACEWALL.

STAY CLOSE.

I'M TAKING US *HOME*.

I'M TAKING US RIGHT TO HIM.

FWASH!

UHN!

AAHH!

NICE LANDING, IDIOT.

YOU REALLY LOVE COMPLAINING, DON'T YOU?

GUYS...

WHEN THIS IS DONE, I'M GOING TO HURT YOU. BADLY.

TRY IT. YOU'RE ONLY ALIVE BECAUSE I--

GUYS!

I THINK WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM HERE.

WHAT IS THAT?

IT'S A BOTTLE CAP.

WHY'S IT SO BIG?

YEAH...I DON'T THINK IT'S THE CAP THAT'S BIG.

I THINK WE'RE SMALL.

OHHHHH, DAMN.

We were back on Earth, but something was wrong. Really wrong.

Later, Agent Venom would tell me that Dr. Ketola, the woman who had rebuilt the Prometheus Pit that got us all to the Microverse in the first place, had warned him this could happen.

A size differential upon returning, she had said. It would wear off, in theory.

HOLY--

LOOK AT YOU.

But the only problem was that Carnage got home first.

BITE-SIZED.

HAHAHA HAHA!

KATY, MOVE!

DO WE HAVE A PLAN HERE?

THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY FALL?

GREAT. I'M GOING FOR HIS EYES.

HSSS!

UHN!

THE HYBRIDS...FROM RADU'S BODY BANKS...

REEEEEE!

As a reporter, you build disassociation. You don't get involved, to keep your objectivity.

THUD!

When you report on the things I report on…you do it to keep your sanity.

This is one of those times.

In the Microverse… with alien despots and saviors, spaceships and monsters…it was too surreal.

You could separate yourself, see it as a kind of out-of-body experience.

But here…seeing these monsters swarm over us, over the people of Houston, Texas…

The true horror of it hit home.

The small hybrids were being absorbed and spat back out of Carnage's body at an alarming rate. One went in and two emerged.

Nothing Scarlet Spider and Venom could do would be enough.

That nothing they could do would be enough.

People were dying, and dying horribly.

Like I said… no happy endings.

But there's a difference between an unhappy ending…

…and a never-ending nightmare.

YOU BROUGHT THIS ON YOURSELVES!

I LEFT! I LEFT THIS WHOLE UNIVERSE BEHIND, BUT YOU HAD TO COME AFTER ME!

IT'S LIKE YOU WANT ME TO KILL YOU!

CAN'T... CAN'T MOVE...

...VENOM...

YOU'RE BEGGING ME FOR IT.

NYEAARGHH!

WELL, I'M HAPPY TO--

SHHHH!

AAAAAHHH!

SHHHH!

And then it happens. The size differential, the one Dr. Ketola said would wear off in theory?

Turns out her theories are pretty good. She left out the part that said it would be **agony.**

WHAT'S THE MATTER, FELLAS?

THAT GROWTH SPURT TAKE A BIT OUT OF YOU?

THAT'S TOO BAD REALLY.

BECAUSE I'M FEELING TIP-TOP!

NOT-SPIDER-MAN AND NOT-VENOM... WHAT A PAIR OF FEEBLE HALF-ASS HEROES YOU TURNED OUT TO BE.

BUT, ME... I'M *PURE*... UNDILUTED.

CARNAGE!

HE STILL WANTS A FIGHT.

LET'S NOT DISAPPOINT HIM.

KATY... GO!

GET AS FAR AWAY FROM HERE AS POSSIBLE!

HOW DO YOU WANT TO DO THIS?

THE MOST PAINFUL WAY POSSIBLE.

When he passed through the Prometheus Pit, maybe he was simply Cletus Kasady, serial killer with a symbiote.

But something had changed.

SHGGGNNNK!

URECEET! URECT!

SLLKKKSH!

Something had taught him how terrible he could be if he simply abandoned what little humanity he had left.

YEEEAAAHHH!

Carnage came back stronger…as if the things he had seen in the Microverse had opened his eyes.

It makes you wonder how the rest of us might have been changed by the trip.

GET LOST, NOT-SPIDER-MAN!

I WANNA HAVE A WORD WITH MY DAD--- ALONE!

SMACK!

OOF!

THIS COULD BE A FRESH START FOR US, DAD!

WE SYMBIOTES... WE COULD BE ONE...

...LIKE WE WERE IN THE MICROVERSE... SPREADING OUT... INFECTING EVERYTHING...

...ONE WITH EACH OTHER...

...ONE WITH THE UNIVERSE!

RRAAR GH!

CHMOMP!

GET OFF!

YOU JUST HAVE TO GIVE IN... RELAX... LET IT HAPPEN...

...BECOME WHAT YOU... WHAT WE... WERE MEANT TO BE...

NO...

...DAMMIT!

HRRR

GAMEY

HIT!

THIS IS GONNA...

WREEEE

There are monsters inside us all.

HOLD IT... TOGETHER... THOMPSON... GAH... OH...

We deny it. We fight against it. We cling to the idea of our inherent humanity, our better natures.

But time after time, we see those better natures fail.

We see the tragedies that result when the monsters come out.

HNN... NN...

HEY. IDIOT.

We've seen good men rise to fight them.

NICE SHOT.

...

THANKS.

HNNN...

HE'S STILL ALIVE?! WHAT NOW?

I'LL CALL THE AVENGERS. THEY'LL CONTAIN HIM UNTIL WE GET HIM INTO A FACILITY THAT CAN HANDLE HIM.

AND THEN WHAT?

But the monsters always come back.

KILL...YOU... EVERYONE...HA... *HEHEHEH*... EVERYBODY...

WE STOPPED HIM. AND THAT HAS TO BE GOOD ENOUGH.

What if we need something else?

What if when heroes fail…

…we need to become that which we would fight?

What if we need to become monsters?

NO!

WHAT DID YOU DO?!

HOW MANY? HOW MANY HAS HE KILLED?

THE SYMBIOTE--

NO. IT WAS NEVER THE SYMBIOTE.

IT WAS *US.*

HOW MANY TIMES HAS HE BEEN LOCKED UP ONLY TO ESCAPE AND KILL AGAIN? AT A CERTAIN POINT, IT'S NOT HIS FAULT ANYMORE.

HE IS WHAT HE IS.

HE KILLS BECAUSE WE *LET* HIM.

WHAT SEPARATES US, THEN? WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT FROM HIM?

THIS CAN'T BE THE ANSWER. THERE HAS ANOTHER WAY.

LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU FIND IT.

EPILOGUE.

N.A.S.A.

In the end, the Prometheus Pit was dismantled.

Park Plaza Hospital, Houston Medical Center.

Dr. Ketola, the woman who rebuilt the Pit, quit her job to spend time with her husband.

She had built a door to another universe, and didn't like what came out of it.

Outside The Galleria, Houston, Texas.

And the city of Houston grieved.

Twenty-three people died that day.

The Microverse.

But as one world heals, what other scars are left behind?

What monsters remain, trying to kill whatever light is still inside us?

The Four Seasons Hotel, Houston.

Sometimes it takes monsters to fight monsters, but at what cost?

How do you fight monsters…

KAINE?

…without becoming one?

Undisclosed Containment Facility.

AGENT VENOM?

I'M SORRY. I DON'T THINK YOU'VE BEEN *LISTENING* TO ME.

...SORRY. MY MIND'S MILES AWAY.

AFTER WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH, IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE.

MR. KASADY'S SURVIVED HIS WOUNDS, BUT HE'S COMPLETELY *CATATONIC*. HE'S EFFECTIVELY BEEN *LOBOTOMIZED*.

SO...HE'S WHAT?

HARMLESS?

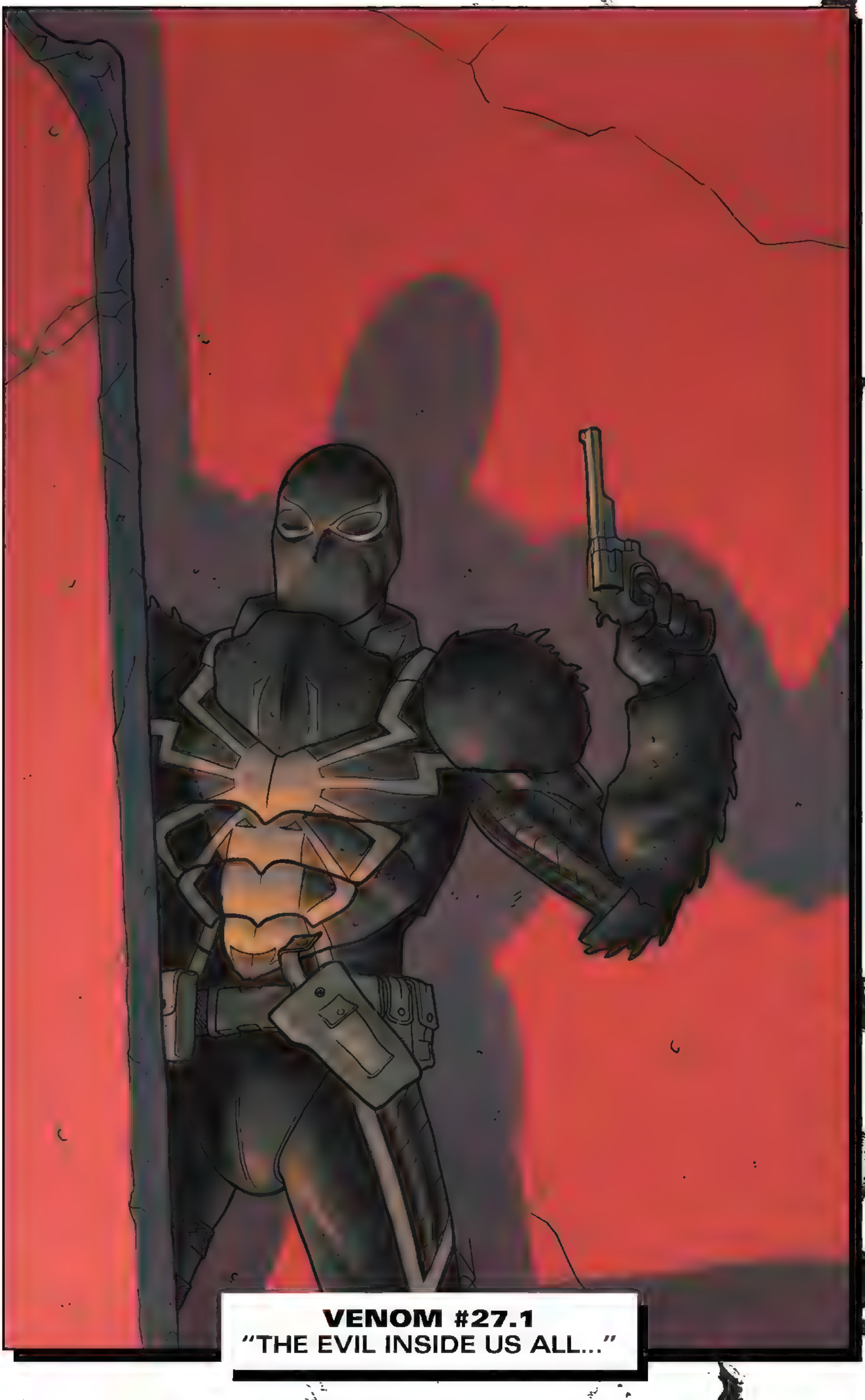
I'M AFRAID NOT.

THE *SYMBIOTE* IS STILL IN HIS BLOODSTREAM. HE'S STILL THE ALIEN'S *HOST*.

BUT WITHOUT THE HUMAN SIDE... REGARDLESS OF HOW INHUMAN KASADAY *MIGHT* HAVE BEEN...THE SYMBIOTE'S TECHNICALLY IN *FULL* CONTROL.

WE HAVE THE CREATURE *SEDATED* NOW...

...BUT *CARNAGE* IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN *EVER*.



VENOM #27.1
"THE EVIL INSIDE US ALL..."

Athol, Massachusetts.

HERE'S MY OFFER... TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT...

YOU GUYS TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW, AND I'LL STOP *PUNCHING* YOU.

IN TEN TO TWENTY YEARS, YOUR WHOLE GANG WILL BE OUT OF PRISON...

...AND YOU CAN GO BACK TO LOWERING THE I.Q. OF MOSH PITS, BREWING MOONSHINE, AND...I DUNNO...DATING YOUR SIBLINGS.

SOUND *FAIR?*

ICE THIS FREAK!

GUESS NOT.

MY NAME IS EUGENE "FLASH" THOMPSON.

ONCE UPON A TIME... I THOUGHT DEVIL-WORSHIPPING CULTS WERE JUST THE STUFF OF *GHOST STORIES*.

SOMETHING TO SCARE THE GIRLS...TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO SNUGGLE UP *CLOSE* ON CHILLY NIGHTS.

BLAM! B-BLAM! BLAM!

THESE DAYS, I'M A SOLDIER, A SECRET AGENT, AND WEAR A SHAPE-SHIFTING ALIEN SUIT THAT HELPS ME DO *THIS*.

AND SECTS LIKE THE *HARKSPUR BROOD* ARE ALL TOO *REAL*...AND ALL TOO *COMMON*.

BLAM! B-BLAM! BLAM!

MY "SUIT" OF ALIEN FLESH COMES FULLY LOADED WITH A WIDE ASSORTMENT OF EXTRA-HUMAN ABILITIES.

THE SYMBIOTE AND ME... TOGETHER... WE'RE CALLED *VENOM*.

AAAGH!

P-PLEASE... AGH...I DON'T... I DON'T KNOW...

ONE OF YOU REDNECK FREAKS BETTER START TALKING... *FAST*...OR I'LL...

REEEAAAGGGHHH!

SHHR-KRACK!

USING NON-LETHAL AMMUNITION.

RUBBER BULLETS.

THE FINEST URBAN PACIFICATION MONEY CAN BUY.

BLAM! BLAM! B-BLAM!

I CAN'T INTERROGATE THEM IF THEY'RE DEAD.

IF I KILL THEM...

...THEY WON'T FEEL A THING.

PROBLEM IS...EVEN THOUGH I'M ASKING... I DON'T WANT TO HEAR WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY...DON'T WANT TO STOP HITTING THEM.

THEY'RE BAD PEOPLE. THEY DESERVE THIS BEATING.

I...I'LL COOPERATE! I SWEAR!

TOO LATE.

WHEN THEY WAKE UP IN A COLD SWEAT IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, I WANT IT TO BE MY FACE THAT HAUNTS THEM.

HRRK!

CHUNK!

"AGENT VENOM... WHAT'S WRONG?

"YOU SEEM POSITIVELY ON EDGE."

The Raft.
Maximum Security Prison.

"DID THE *HARKSPUR BROOD* SCURRY OFF INTO ANOTHER ONE OF THEIR HIDEY HOLES?

"I *WARNED* YOU THEY WERE A *SLIPPERY* BUNCH."

I FOUND THEM, *HELLSTROM*, JUST LIKE YOU SAID.

EXCELLENT. MY REPUTATION AS AN *INFORMANT* REMAINS INTACT.

CAN'T SAY THEY WERE HELPFUL.

THEY DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT...UH... *UNDERWORLD* PERSONNEL CHANGES.

AND WHEN I SAY "UNDERWORLD," I MEAN IN THE *BIBLICAL* SENSE.

THE *DESCENT*. A BUNCH OF--GET THIS--DEMONS AND DEVILS SELECTING *SUCCESSORS* TO TAKE THEIR PLACE.

I'M ON THE NOMINATION BLOCK, ALONG WITH *DAIMON HELLSTROM* AND WHO KNOWS HOW MANY OTHERS.

WHY DO I FEEL LIKE YOU'RE STILL PLAYING GAMES WITH ME?

NO GAMES.

IT'S NOT SURPRISING THAT THEY WERE IN THE DARK.

NOT *EVERY* D.O.A. CELL IS PRIVY TO THOSE DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS.

HELLSTROM BETRAYED EVERYTHING HE STOOD FOR TO MAKE SURE HE'S CHOSEN INSTEAD OF SOMEONE REALLY...*AWFUL*.

LESSER OF TWO EVILS...CHANGE THE SYSTEM FROM THE INSIDE... OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...

...OR MAYBE HE'S JUST AN @#$%.

LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE. YOU APPREHENDED A GROUP OF DANGEROUS CRIMINALS...

...AND A FEW MORE *PAWNS* ARE OFF THE BOARD.

STOP SMILING!

AFTER WHAT YOU DID...

TRYING TO POSSESS ME... PUTTING A DEMON INSIDE ME...

YOU DON'T GET TO TREAT ME LIKE SOME CLUELESS ERRAND BOY!

SHH-WHAM!

YOU'LL FIND THAT PLAYING THE MARTYR ONLY EVER REALLY WORKED FOR ONE PERSON IN ALL OF HISTORY.

I'M SURE YOU USED ALL YOUR VERY BEST CHARACTER TRAITS TO PERSUADE THOSE HARKSPUR CURS TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS.

THOSE SAME TACTICS, THOUGH, DON'T RATTLE ME.

WE NEED EACH OTHER, YOU AND I. SO WE SHOULD AT LEAST BE CIVIL.

ALAS! IT APPEARS TODAY'S VISIT WILL BE CUT SHORT.

AGENT VENOM! STEP AWAY FROM THE GLASS!

I WORRY ABOUT YOU, AGENT VENOM. I REALLY DO.

YOU SEEM DISTRACTED... RESTLESS... AGITATED.

IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT AT HOME?

"I HOPE YOU'RE NOT BURDENED BY ANY *FAMILY* DRAMA."

Upstate New York.

ROSE MANOR CENTER FOR WELLNESS

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, MRS. THOMPSON, I THINK YOU MADE A GOOD DECISION ADMITTING YOURSELF.

OUR FACILITY IS IDEALLY EQUIPPED TO HELP YOU MANAGE THE STRESS, ANXIETY, AND FEAR YOU'VE BEEN EXPERIENCING.

YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG, LADY.

MY MOM DIDN'T COME HERE TO GET BETTER...NO MATTER WHAT SHE THINKS.

YOU'LL WORK WITH A TEAM OF COUNSELORS TO DEVELOP AN INDIVIDUALIZED COURSE OF TREATMENT.

AND WE ALSO HAVE A NUMBER OF GROUP ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.

SHE CAME HERE TO GET LOST...TO *HIDE.*

WE OFFER A PEACEFUL, NURTURING ENVIRONMENT TO FACILITATE YOUR RECOVERY WHILE MAKING SURE YOU HAVE ALL THE AMENITIES OF HOME.

AND ALLOW ME TO SAY THAT IT'S *SO NICE* TO SEE THAT YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS SUPPORT YOUR CHOICES.

HMMPH...

SHE'S HIDING FROM *ME.*

FROM VENOM.

THANKS FOR COMING ALONG, PETE. I KNOW IT'S A PAIN, BUT IT MEANS A LOT.

IT'S FUNNY, Y'KNOW?

FOR SO LONG, I THOUGHT I'D BE THE ONE WHO'D END UP IN REHAB. I NEVER EXPECTED MY MOM...

WITH ALL SHE'S BEEN THROUGH...LOSING YOUR DAD...THE RECENT ATTACKS...IT'S NO WONDER SHE WANTS TO LEVEL OUT.

PEOPLE *BOUNCE BACK* FROM THIS SORT OF THING.

SHE'LL BOUNCE BACK.

SPEAKING OF...

...UH...

I HEARD FROM SOMEONE FROM THE...UH...I GUESS FROM THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

A.J. PATTON.

A.J.?

HE JUST MOVED BACK TO THE CITY.

I WASN'T SURE IF I SHOULD TELL YOU OR NOT. YOU KNOW, WITH ALL THAT'S GOING ON.

BUT HE MENTIONED YOU... SAID YOU SHOULD GET IN TOUCH...IF YOU *WANTED*.

New York, New York.

CAN'T BLAME MOM FOR NEEDING SOME...*TIME*...TO COLLECT HERSELF.

WHEN CRIME-MASTER AND HIS SAVAGE SIX CAME AFTER ME, SHE SAW VENOM AT HIS *CRUELEST*.*

SCARED...CONFUSED ...ANGRY...I LET THE *MONSTER* OFF THE CHAIN...RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER.

NOW...LIKE THE "BAD PEOPLE" WITH THEIR BRUISES AND BROKEN BONES...SHE SEES VENOM'S FACE WHENEVER SHE'S AFRAID.

*SEE VENOM ISSUES #17-22 --TOM.

BEING *HAUNTED* LIKE THAT... HAUNTED BY THE MONSTER...DROVE HER TO ROSE MANOR.

BUT A.J. PATTON...

IT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IF IT WAS *FLASH THOMPSON'S* FACE THAT GAVE HIM NIGHTMARES.

I DIDN'T CARE THAT A.J. WAS GAY. HELL...BACK THEN, I'M NOT EVEN SURE I FULLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT THAT EVEN MEANT.

I ONLY CARED THAT I WAS ANGRY.

ALWAYS ANGRY.

AND HE WAS DIFFERENT.

OUT OF MY WAY, FRUITLOOP!

UNNF!

SLAM!

BEING DISSIMILAR...BEING MISUNDERSTOOD...BEING SMALLER THAN ME...WAS ALL IT TOOK.

AAAAUGH!

KRAK

FLASH... I THINK HE'S HAD...

THAT'S ENOUGH, MAN!

...

A.J. NEVER TOLD ANYONE WHAT I HAD DONE TO HIM.

AND HE GRADUATED WITH HIS ARM IN A SLING.

BECAUSE I WAS ANGRY.

AJ 5917

Brooklyn Heights.

"I'M GLAD YOU CALLED, FLASH."

EXCUSE THE MESS. UNPACKING SEEMS TO BE TAKING FOREVER.

AND SORRY ABOUT THE BUMPY RIDE UP THE STEPS.

I'M USED TO THOSE BUMPY RIDES BY NOW.

BESIDES... I WAS HALFWAY EXPECTING YOU TO ROLL ME STRAIGHT INTO THE STREET.

ATTIC

BOOKS

ATTIC

STUDY

AFTER THE WAY I...

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.

FLASH THOMPSON, THIS IS MY *HUSBAND*, DAN.

ATTIC

STUDY

GOOD TO MEET YOU.

I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU.

YEAH.

I CAN'T IMAGINE YOU'VE HEARD ANYTHING I'M *PROUD* OF.

WHAT? YOU DON'T THINK I RECOUNT TALES OF ALL YOUR GAME-WINNING TOUCHDOWNS?

DAN...MAYBE YOU COULD GET OUR GUEST A DRINK?

WHAT DO YOU SAY, FLASH? SODA? BEER?

WATER WOULD BE FINE.

SO, A.J... LOOK...

...I WAS SURPRISED WHEN PETE GAVE ME YOUR NUMBER AND ALL.

LIKE I WAS SAYING, AFTER THE WAY I TREATED YOU IN HIGH SCHOOL, I JUST FEEL LIKE I--

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE, FLASH.

REALLY.

I'LL ADMIT... SOME OF THOSE DAYS WERE REALLY TOUGH.

BUT I GOT PAST IT. I'M NOT *SCARRED*. I'M NOT *WOUNDED*.

I'M ACTUALLY DOING *REALLY* WELL.

DAN'S GREAT. THE APARTMENT IS AN OLD FIXER-UPPER, BUT I LOVE IT. AND I'VE GOT A TERRIFIC JOB.

I WORK WITH SCHOOL BOARDS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, CONSULTING WITH PARENTS OF TROUBLED KIDS, WORKING WITH YOUTH GROUPS.

I'M *HAPPY*.

HAPPY, HUH?

THAT'S... *SOMETHING*... THAT'S REALLY GREAT TO HEAR.

WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

YOU'RE PRETTY MUCH LOOKING AT IT.

WAS IN THE ARMY FOR A WHILE. YOU PROBABLY KNEW ABOUT THAT. DIDN'T MAKE A CAREER OF IT FOR *OBVIOUS* REASONS.

WAS WORKING WITH THE V.A. FOR A BIT, BUT I GUESS THAT DRIED UP.

IT'S STRANGE HOW THINGS CHANGE, ISN'T IT?

MAN...

YOU DON'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT.

HEY, A.J.?

GIVE ME A HAND IN HERE?

SORRY. EXCUSE ME.

LIKE I SAID, THE PLACE IS A *MESS*.

HE PROBABLY CAN'T FIND THE FAUCET OR SOMETHING.

HEY...

I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE DOING ALL RIGHT WITH THIS.

I'M *FINE*, REALLY.

WELL, DON'T THINK I HAVEN'T NOTICED THAT YOU DIDN'T LET HIM *APOLOGIZE* FOR THE WAY HE TREATED YOU.

MAYBE HE DOESN'T KNOW YOU STILL WAKE UP EVERY NOW AND THEN FROM NIGHTMARES OF HIM BEATING YOU.

MAYBE HE DOESN'T KNOW YOUR ARM STILL GIVES YOU TROUBLE TO THIS DAY.

BUT I DO. AND I'M STILL NOT SURE WHY YOU INVITED THAT *MONSTER* INTO OUR HOUSE.

DOES HE LOOK LIKE A MONSTER TO YOU?

BECAUSE... WHEN I LOOK AT HIM, I JUST FEEL...*PITY*.

WHEN I LOOK AT HIM NOW...

...ALL I SEE IS A BROKEN-DOWN *WASH-OUT*.

THEY'RE WHISPERING... AND I APPRECIATE IT... BUT THE PLACE ISN'T THAT BIG, SOUND CARRIES...

...AND I'M SITTING RIGHT HERE.

RIGHT HERE.

YES.

THE SUIT.

I NEED IT.

North Central Correctional Institute.
Gardner, Massachusetts.

WAKEY WAKEY.

HNNH?

INFIRMARY CAM

REC

2:45:35 AM

INFIRMARY CAM

REC

2:45:37 AM

YOU DIDN'T THINK YOU'D SEEN THE *LAST* OF ME, DID YOU?

NO, NO, NO...

WE PLAYED A LITTLE BIT... BUT NOW I'M BACK FOR *MORE.*

BACK TO *FINISH* WHAT I STARTED.

I...I ALREADY TOLD YOU.

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT--

MMMMPH!

AH AH AH...

WHEN I WANT TO HEAR YOUR TONGUE WAGGING, I'LL RIP IT OUT AND STITCH IT TO A DOG'S TAIL.

SPLAT!

WAA-SMASH!

WHHUFF!

WHAM!

GOOD TALK.

I'M GONNA LET THAT SINK IN.

I'M GONNA LET YOU HEAL UP.

AND THEN ONE DAY...WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT...

...I'LL COME BACK TO PLAY.

ROSE MANOR
CENTER FOR WELLNESS

PLEASE...
...PLEASE...
SKRTCH! SKRRRRRTCH! SKRRRRRTCH!

...GO AWAY.
SKRRRRRTCH! SKRRRRRTCH!

AWWW... YOU DON'T WANT ME TO COME INSIDE?
TO TUCK YOU IN?

SLLLLGGGKK

DON'T MIND ME, THEN.
I'LL JUST STAY HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE AND WATCH YOU.

I'LL WATCH YOU SLEEPING.
PLEASE. GO AWAY.

The Next Day...

NO OFFENSE, FLASH, BUT YOU LOOK LIKE *HELL*. ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH *SLEEP?*

I DUNNO, PETE.

I CRASHED EARLY LAST NIGHT, BUT I FEEL LIKE I DIDN'T SLEEP A WINK.

NO REST FOR THE WICKED, I GUESS.

LISTEN, PETE. MEETING WITH A.J. THE OTHER DAY GOT ME THINKING.

YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND, AND I'M--

WELL, I DON'T SAY IT OFTEN ENOUGH, BUT I'M *PROUD* OF YOU.

CAREFUL, ALL-STAR. YOU'RE STARTING TO SOUND LIKE *AUNT MAY.*

ALL I'M SAYING IS...YOU'RE OUT THERE EVERY DAY, BEING BRILLIANT.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY FROM THAT PUNY LITTLE WIMP BACK IN HIGH SCHOOL.

YOU'RE A REAL *SUCCESS STORY.*

YOU KNOW COMPLIMENTS MAKE ME UNEASY, RIGHT?

WHAT I KNOW IS I WAS A REAL JACKASS TO YOU IN SCHOOL.

I'M *SORRY* FOR THE WAY I PICKED ON YOU.

BUT YOU TURNED OUT ALL RIGHT.

I MEAN, IT WASN'T *SO BAD*, RIGHT? I DIDN'T MESS YOU UP FOR LIFE OR ANYTHING.

...

FLASH.

I'M...I'M JUST GONNA COME OUT AND SAY THIS, I GUESS.

YOU WERE *AWFUL.*

THERE WERE DAYS I WANTED TO FAKE BEING SICK JUST SO I DIDN'T HAVE TO GO TO SCHOOL.

AND I *LOVED* SCHOOL.

I JUST...I JUST COULDN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT OF WALKING THROUGH THOSE DOORS AND FACING...

...YOU.

THERE WERE WEEKS ON END WHEN I DIDN'T GO TO THE RESTROOM BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID I'D FIND YOU WAITING FOR ME IN THERE.

I ATE LUNCH ALONE... HIDING IN A CLASSROOM...BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT YOU PICKING ON ME IN THE CAFETERIA.

BUT...I GUESS...

I GUESS I JUST FIGURED OUT HOW TO GET *PAST* IT ALL.

I *MOVED* ON.

MOVE ON.

WITH ALL THAT'S BEEN HAPPENING...WITH MY MOM...WITH BETTY...I THINK I NEED A CHANGE OF SCENERY.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'M GONNA GO YET. *ANYWHERE*, I GUESS.

BUT I'M *LEAVING* NEW YORK, PETE.

AND I'M NOT COMING BACK.

VENOM #28
"THE LAND WHERE THE KILLERS DWELL"

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

LISTEN, JULIE...I'M NOT SURE I CAN TAKE MUCH MORE SHOPPING.

AND I *KNOW* THE CREDIT CARDS CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE.

WHAT DO YOU SAY? HOME?

I SAY...

The Gallery Mall.

...I HAVE *ONE* MORE STOP IN MIND.

YOU'VE GOT *THREE* MONTHS' SALARY *BURNING* A HOLE IN YOUR POCKET, DON'T YOU?

NICE TRY.

YOUR PLAN FAILED ABOUT THE TIME WE STEPPED INTO BATH AND--

WWWW

New York City.

TELL ME AGAIN HOW THIS IS HAPPENING?

I THINK IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS, ISN'T IT?

YOU HOPPED INTO THE RING, THINKING YOU'D NEED TO TAKE IT EASY ON ME.

BUT I'M GIVING YOU A RUN FOR YOUR MONEY.

OL' FLASH THOMPSON CAN HOLD HIS OWN, EVEN AGAINST A *GODDESS*.

WHO AM I KIDDING?

DESPITE THE VERY BEST FANCY FOOTWORK A SHAPESHIFTING ALIEN SYMBIOTE CAN PROVIDE...

...SHE'S *KILLING* ME.

SHE PUNCHES WITH THE FORCE OF A LOCOMOTIVE.

WHAT DID I EXPECT FROM A *VALKYRIE*, THOUGH?

I HAVE FEASTED IN THE WAR-HALLS OF ASGARD.

I KNOW ALL THE VERY BEST *BRAGGARTS*.

HHT!

WHOMP!

THEM, YOU WOULD GIVE A RUN FOR THEIR MONEY.

NOT ME.

BUT I'VE TALKED TOO MUCH TRASH TO LET IT SHOW.

NEVER LET THEM SEE YOU SWEAT.

YOU'RE WEARING DOWN.

GETTING SLOPPY.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING.

I'VE STILL GOT A FEW TRICKS UP MY SLEEVE.

HUHH--

HA!

I'VE TUSSLED WITH SPIDER-MAN AND SCARLET SPIDER AND CAPTAIN AMERICA...

...AND I'VE TRAINED WITH FOOTBALL COACHES AND DRILL SERGEANTS WHO COULD BUST ANY OF THOSE GUYS DOWN INTO TEARS.

I'M NO SLOUCH.

BUT I'M STILL PROBABLY GONNA *DIE* TODAY.

NOT A BAD TRICK.

BUT DON'T RELAX JUST YET.

WHUMPF!

THE RULES OF THE FIGHT CAN CHANGE WITHOUT A MOMENT'S WARNING!

SHRRAKK!

YAAA--

YOU... YOU CHEATED.

I WON.

NO... SUMMONING YOUR MAGIC SWORD FROM THIN AIR... IN THE MIDDLE OF A SPARRING MATCH...

THAT'S CHEATING.

LET ME MAKE IT UP TO YOU.

TO THE *VICTOR* GOES THE--

BRRRR-ZZZ BRRRR-ZZZ

SPOILED.

KATY

BRRRR-ZZZ BRRRR-ZZZ

KATY

BRRRR-ZZZ BRRRR-ZZZ

THWIP!

SORRY... UH...

WHAT YOU WERE THINKING...THAT WAS A *GOOD* THOUGHT.

HOLD ON TO THAT FOR JUST A SECOND.

NY

THIS BETTER BE IMPORTANT, KIERNAN.

WELL, HELLO TO YOU, TOO, SUNSHINE.

DID I CATCH YOU AT A BAD TIME?

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I'LL ANSWER YOUR QUESTION WITH A QUESTION.

IT'S AN OLD TRICK FROM WHEN I WANTED TO BE A THERAPIST.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PHILADELPHIA?

ONLY WHAT I'VE SEEN ON ALWAYS SUNNY.

HOLD ON.

ALMOST DROPPED MY PHONE.

WHAT?

DON'T YOU HAVE AN EARPIECE?

YOUR HAIR...IF YOU HAVE ANY UNDER THAT MASK OF YOURS...WOULD TURN WHITE IF I TOLD YOU HALF THE CONSPIRACY THEORIES I'VE HEARD ABOUT CELL PHONE EARPIECES.

BUT... LOOK...I'M WORKING ON A STORY HERE IN PHILLY.

I THINK IT MIGHT BE WORTH YOUR TIME.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WHAT'S GOING ON?

OH, BOY.

HELLO?

KIERNAN?

I THOUGHT YOU SAID NO ONE WOULD COME LOOKING FOR US HERE, VECTOR.

SO I MISCALCULATED, VAPOR. SUE ME.

WHOEVER OUR LITTLE SNOOP IS...HOWEVER SHE FOUND US...YOU CAN BET SHE DIDN'T EXPECT TO RUN INTO--

--THE U-FOES!

GRAB HER. SEE *WHAT* SHE KNOWS.

I'M MORE CONCERNED WITH *WHO ELSE* SHE MIGHT'VE TALKED TO.

THERE'S A LOT RIDING ON THIS OP.

GGGK!

DON'T WORRY, X-RAY.

SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING *TO* TELL ANYONE.

AND EVEN IF SHE HAD...

KATY?!

"...WHO WOULD BE *FOOL ENOUGH* TO TAKE US ON?"

PHILADELPHIA.

BEEN HERE A FEW TIMES...BUT NEVER ON *BUSINESS*.

A COUPLE OF CONCERT ROAD TRIPS...A FEW CLASS FIELD TRIPS BACK IN SCHOOL...

YOU KNOW... TO LEARN ALL ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF *INDEPENDENCE* AND *LIBERTY*...

MAYBE I SHOULD'VE PAID CLOSER ATTENTION.

CHEESESTEAKS ARE GOOD, THOUGH.

MOTEL

VACANCY

Germantown Avenue.

DIDN'T TAKE MUCH WORK TO FIND OUT WHERE KATY'S EDITORS AT *THE INQUISITOR* PUT HER UP.

WHOA!

HANGING OUT WITH SO MANY JOURNALISTS AND INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS...

...I GUESS SOME *TRICKS* RUB OFF ON YOU.

YOU'D THINK THEY COULD'VE SPRUNG FOR *BETTER* ACCOMMODATIONS.

OR MAYBE KATY JUST WANTED SOMEPLACE OUT OF THE WAY...WHERE NO ONE WOULD EXPECT TO LOOK.

SHRAK!

THE GIRL STRIKES ME AS MORE THAN A LITTLE *PARANOID.*

PROJECT RAINBOW.

BATTLESHIPS VANISHING WITHOUT A TRACE.

INVISIBILITY. FLYING SAUCERS. TELEPORTATION.

SOUNDS LIKE KATY'S BREAD AND BUTTER.

FUNNY...

FOR A GUY WHO HAS BEEN TO THE MICROVERSE... TO *HELL*...

FOR A GUY WHO WEARS AN *EXTRATERRESTRIAL SYMBIOTE* LIKE A UNIFORM...I'VE GOT A SKEPTICAL STREAK A MILE WIDE.

...GALLERY MALL?

WHOA!

WHAT THE--

PSHH!

FWWSH!

FWWSH!

ROOM BECOMES SUPER-HEATED IN SECONDS.

NO CHANCE TO SAVE ANY OF THE INFORMATION.

JUMP CLEAR. BEFORE--

WA-BOOOOM!

WHAT DID I TELL YOU!

I KNEW THAT REPORTER TOLD SOMEBODY!

VENOM!

YOU GUYS REMEMBER ME? WOW, I MUST BE IN THE BIG LEAGUES NOW.

YOU GUYS MAKE SURE THERE'S NOTHING LEFT OF THE REPORTER'S RESEARCH!

I'LL SQUASH--

HEY!

SHWAM!

THE U-FOES.

RAN INTO THESE JOKERS NOT LONG AGO.

THEY NEARLY KILLED ME...AND THAT TIME I HAD BACKUP.

THIS'LL BE A TRIP.

AGGK!

SMACK!

WHAT WAS THAT?

I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK THAT KIND OF JUDO CRAP IS GONNA SLOW ME DOWN.

SLWAP

IRONCLAD'S THEIR TANK...NEAR INDESTRUCTIBLE... INCREASING HIS SIZE...

DIDN'T MEAN TO SLOW YOU DOWN, BIG GUY.

KRAK!

HUH--

JUST WANTED TO ATTACH A *GRENADE* TO THE SIDE OF THAT HUGE METAL *MELON* OF YOURS.

LET'S SEE HOW *STURDY* HE IS.

CHOOM!

HRRRGGH!

X-RAY! LET'S END THIS! CUT HIM TO PIECES!

I'M TRYING, SIS--

--BUT HE WON'T HOLD STILL!

ZRAK! ZZRAK! ZRRRZAK!

POISON GAS.

SYMBIOTE ABSORBS IT. VENTS THE BAD STUFF AWAY.

SORRY, LADY!

THAT TRICK DOESN'T WORK ON MY WORST DAY.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

SYMBIOTE'S REACTING INSTINCTIVELY...SAVED MY HIDE.

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE "NEUTERED"...BUT I WONDER...

WHAT DOES IT *REMEMBER?*

ALL RIGHT, "HERO."

YOU THINK THIS IS THE BIG LEAGUE?

LET'S SEE HOW MANY PEOPLE YOU LET *DIE* WHILE YOU'RE SAVING YOUR OWN HIDE.

HOLY!

WATCH IT, YZIZ!

THINGS AIN'T EVEN 'UMAN!

HEAD FOR THE WOODER!

WRAKKOW!

TIME TO ALTER THE GAME PLAN.

OH, LORD...

NO!

GOING TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE U-FOES IS GOING TO GET THOSE PEOPLE KILLED.

T-THANK YOU!

BUT I CAN DAMN SURE MAKE A *DIFFERENCE.*

GO! GET CLEAR! DON'T LOOK BACK! JUST--

AND JUST LIKE THAT...THE RULES *CHANGE* AGAIN.

ZZRAKK!

CUTTING THESE PEOPLE APART.

CRUSHING THEM.

BRUTE FORCE AND LASERS AND ACID CLOUDS...

...KILLING THESE PEOPLE AS EASILY AS THEY MIGHT KILL BUGS...

...AND ME...

...I'M...

HE'S NOT HOPPING AROUND NOW!

NUKE HIM!

GLADLY.

THEY'RE PLAYING FOR KEEPS.

I'M JUST PLAYING AT BEING A--

FLASHPOINT

JUST THE WAY I LIKE MY SUPER HEROES.

EXTRA CRISPY.

TORCH WHAT'S LEFT OF THE MOTEL.

I DON'T WANT ANY TRACE OF THAT REPORTER'S RESEARCH LEFT BEHIND.

ONCE HER NOTES ARE DESTROYED...

"...WE CAN HEAD HOME JUST IN TIME TO WATCH HER *DIE*."

WWWHHH

...BUT *THEY* CERTAINLY ARE...

...OR *WERE*, WHICHEVER THE CASE MAY BE.

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH *FEAR.*

NO ONE FAULTS THE *GUINEA PIG* FOR BEING FRIGHTENED.

AND WE HAVE A LOT OF EQUIPMENT TO *TEST.*

LET'S TURN THIS BABY ON AND SEE WHAT SHE CAN DO TO THAT PRETTY FACE OF YOURS...

SHALL WE?

VENOM #29
"DROWNING IN A NIGHTMARE"

The Maritime Motel.

GERMANTOWN AVENUE, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT FLASH THOMPSON DOESN'T KNOW THE VALUE OF A *GIMMICK PLAY.*

THE *U-FOES* CAME TO DESTROY KATY'S RESEARCH... TO SLAUGHTER ANY POTENTIAL WITNESSES.

HIT ME WITH EVERYTHING... RIPPED ME TO SHREDS...ALMOST *KILLED* ME...

USED THE SYMBIOTE'S *MIMICRY* TO MAKE THEM THINK THEY'D SUCCEEDED.

NOT THE MOST HEROIC TACTIC, MAYBE, BUT IT SAVED MY HIDE.

THIS GUY WASN'T SO LUCKY. DAMMIT. I'M TOSSING AROUND FOOTBALL TERMS WHEN I SHOULD BE SAVING LIVES.

THIS *ISN'T* A GAME...*WASN'T* A GAME FOR THEM...AND I NEED TO STOP THINKING ABOUT IT LIKE ONE.

HAIL MARY PLAYS... INTERCEPTS... FUMBLES... TOUCHDOWNS...

...COUCHING THE LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE IN TERMS STRAIGHT OUT OF THE GLORY DAY PLAYBOOK...

...IT'S ALL A BUNCH OF SMOKE AND MIRRORS...A COVER-UP FOR THE FEAR.

BECAUSE WHEN IT COMES TO BEING A HERO...WHEN IT COMES TO HELPING PEOPLE...

...I'M TERRIFIED BY WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I FAIL.

LISTEN...YOU REALLY NEED TO THINK THIS THROUGH.

I'M HERE ON ASSIGNMENT. I'M WORKING ON A STORY.

PEOPLE ARE GONNA COME LOOKING FOR ME.

YES, YES.

KATHRYN KIERNAN... THE DAILY INQUISITOR.

BUT YOU ALSO HAVE I.D.S HERE FOR HEALTH INSPECTOR...ORDAINED MINISTER...LICENSED MASSEUSE...

ALL THESE DIFFERENT IDENTITIES AND I'D BE WILLING TO BET THERE'S NO ONE WHO WILL *MISS* ANY OF THEM.

YOU BETTER HOPE THIS DEVICE YOU'RE TESTING... *WHATEVER* IT IS... DOESN'T GIVE ME *SUPER-POWERS*.

BECAUSE AS SOON AS I START SPOUTING FIRE FROM MY EARS OR BENCH-PRESSING *BUSES*, YOU'RE GONNA REGRET IT.

WE'VE BEEN RUNNING *DOZENS* OF *TRIALS* SINCE WE FOUND THIS LOCATION...

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT ANY "*POSITIVE*" SIDE EFFECTS.

CEREBRAL POR

SPEAKING OF WHICH...WE'RE RUNNING LOW ON *TEST SUBJECTS.*

MAYBE A FEW COLLEGE STUDENTS TO MIX IT UP, TEMPLE ISN'T FAR FROM HERE...

YES, SIR.

SO...WHAT? YOU'VE BEEN ABDUCTING PEOPLE TO PLAY "*DOCTOR*"--ALIEN STYLE?

YOU UNCOVER THIS... TREASURE TROVE OF BIZARRE TECHNOLOGY...

...AND BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT SMART ENOUGH OR PATIENT ENOUGH TO TAKE THE TIME TO FIGURE OUT WHAT ANY OF IT DOES, YOU'RE JUST "*BEAMING UP*" A BUNCH OF WOULD-BE GUINEA PIGS?

I'VE NEVER BEEN ONE TO ***WAIT*** FOR WHAT I WANT.

ONCE WE FOUND THE WAREHOUSE...ONCE WE FIGURED OUT THE ***TRANSDUCTION*** EQUIPMENT...

...WE WERE ABLE TO PULL TOGETHER QUITE A FEW ***WORKER BEES*** IN ADDITION TO A FAIR NUMBER OF...

...LET'S CALL THEM ***SACRIFICES*** TO THE GODS OF SCIENCE.

PROCEED WHEN READY.

VRRR

VRRR

The Mütter Museum.

I'VE SEEN SOME CREEPY THINGS... BUT THIS PLACE...

...THIS PLACE *SKEEVES* ME OUT.

WALL-TO-WALL MEDICAL ODDITIES...BRAINS IN JARS...SKULLS OF EVERY SHAPE AND SIZE...

...IT'S LIKE A CARNIVAL SIDESHOW GREW UP AND GOT *RESPECTABLE*.

KATY *LOVES* THIS PLACE, I BET.

AND IF I STAND A CHANCE OF FINDING HER...OF FINDING ALL THE PEOPLE WHO'VE BEEN VANISHING...

I NEED TO *THINK* LIKE KATY.

OKAY...

...THAT'S KINDA RAD.

OF COURSE, HERE I AM, BONDED TO AN ALIEN SYMBIOTE THAT, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ACTS AS PROSTHETIC LEGS WHEN I NEED THEM.

I FIT RIGHT IN AMONG ALL THE *ODDITIES*.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY I SEEM TO ATTRACT *WEIRDNESS* LIKE A FLAME DRAWING IN MOTHS.

HELLO.

EXCUSE ME?

UH...

Y-Y-YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE BACK HERE.

I *MEAN*...THIS AREA IS FOR STAFF ONLY.

I *MEAN*... UH...MAY I HELP YOU?

I *MEAN*... UHM, Y'KNOW... WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

I'M LOOKING FOR *JIMMY Z. JOHNSTON.*

IT'S...UH...NOT "*JIMMY Z.*" THE "*Z*" DOESN'T STAND FOR A MIDDLE NAME.

IT'S "*JIMMY-Z.*" MORE LIKE ONE WORD WHICH IS...Y'KNOW... *COOLER.*

BUT...UH... HE'S NOT HERE RIGHT NOW...SO CAN I TAKE A *MESSAGE?*

YOU SURE HE'S NOT HERE? BECAUSE I'VE BEEN ASKING ALL OVER TOWN.

THE GUY AT *KOFI'S OCCULT BOOKSHOP* SENT ME TO *WONDER-LAND.*

THE GIRL AT WONDERLAND SENT ME TO *FAT JACK'S COMIC CRYPT.*

THE GUYS AT FAT JACK'S SENT ME HERE.

EVERY ONE OF THEM SAID I NEEDED TO TALK TO JIMMY-Z...AND THE *DESCRIPTION* THEY GAVE SOUNDED A LOT LIKE *YOU.*

OKAY... OKAY...YOU GOT ME...

I MEAN... ALL THOSE PEOPLE...THEY *SHOULDA* KNOWN BETTER THAN TO SEND SOME STRANGER TO MY WORK.

I COULD GET IN TROUBLE BECAUSE OF ALL THESE...UH...CONSTANT *INTERRUPTIONS*.

I'M NOT GONNA TAKE UP MUCH OF YOUR TIME.

I'M DOING A LITTLE RESEARCH ON *PROJECT RAINBOW*.

I HEAR YOU'RE SORT OF AN *EXPERT*.

I'M AN EXPERT ON A LOT OF THINGS *NORMAL* PEOPLE DON'T WANNA KNOW ABOUT.

BUT *THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT*, HUH? MAN! ARE THEY PLAYING THAT MOVIE ON CABLE OR SOMETHING?

NOBODY EVER ASKS ABOUT THIS STUFF...AND NOW TWO PEOPLE IN THE SAME WEEK...

PEOPLE START DISAPPEARING OFF THE STREET AND THE *CONSPIRACY NUTS* CRAWL OUT OF THE WOODWORK, HUH?

YOU A REPORTER, TOO? TRYING TO SCOOP THE OTHER ONE MAYBE?

JUST...ALL THESE QUESTIONS ARE ENOUGH TO MAKE A GUY *PARANOID*...

...IF... Y'KNOW... I WASN'T *ALREADY* PARANOID.

JUST *CURIOUS*, IS ALL.

UH-HUH.

WELL, I CAN TELL YOU THIS, MR. CURIOSITY... THE EXPERIMENT WAS NO *HOAX*.

WE IGNORE THE PROBLEM AND IGNORE THE PROBLEM...AND YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS?

"IT TAKES A BATTLESHIP-SIZED CHUNK RIGHT OUT OF YOUR KEISTER.

"IN LATE 1943, THE *USS ELDRIGE* VANISHED FOR A BRIEF PERIOD OF TIME.

"SOME PEOPLE SAY IT NEVER HAPPENED AT ALL. OTHERS SAY THE SHIP WAS RENDERED INVISIBLE.

"BUT THERE ARE THOSE OF US WHO KNOW WHAT *REALLY* HAPPENED."

TELEPORTATION... TRANSDUCTION... SPACE-FOLDING.

THE ELDRIDGE WAS *MOVED*.... ALBEIT FOR A SHORT TIME...TO SOME *OTHER* PLACE.

AND PROJECT RAINBOW MIGHT'VE BEEN *OFFICIALLY* SHUT DOWN NOT LONG AFTER THAT, BUT THOSE WHEELS ARE STILL TURNING, MAN.

THERE ARE BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT...*OFF-THE-BOOKS* OUTFITS...WHO'VE BEEN AT WORK ON THIS STUFF FOR YEARS.

ALL THE *FRINGE TECH* THEY DON'T WANT ANYONE TO KNOW ABOUT...ALL THE *PEOPLE* THEY WANNA KEEP QUIET...

THEY JUST SWEEP IT ALL UNDER THE SUB-DIMENSIONAL CARPET.

THEY GOT THESE *LITTLE SATELLITES*...BUZZING ALL AROUND ALL THE TIME...AND IF THEY WANT YOU *GHOSTED*... THEN THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS.

ALL THESE PEOPLE WHO ARE VANISHING...THAT'S PROJECT RAINBOW STUFF.

I DUNNO WHY PEOPLE ARE GETTING ZAPPED EN MASSE, BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS...

"THERE'S AT LEAST *ONE* WAREHOUSE... *MAYBE MORE*... HIDDEN RIGHT *HERE* IN PHILLY."

I DON'T KNOW WHO'S *CRAZIER*.

JIMMY-Z FOR OBSESSING OVER THIS KIND OF CRAZINESS... OR *ME* FOR LISTENING TO HIM.

BUT HE POINTED KATY TO THIS AREA... AND SHE *DROPPED* OFF THE FACE OF THE PLANET.

GUESS IT'S MY TURN.

...DAMN NERDS.

SIR...YOU MIGHT WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

WE'VE GOT ANOTHER *INTRUDER.*

THAT'S *VENOM.*

I'M STARTING TO GET FRUSTRATED WITH ALL THE *NOSY NEIGHBORS.*

BY ALL MEANS, LET'S INVITE HIM IN.

I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU *KILLED* HIM.

I THOUGHT WE DID, VECTOR.

BECAUSE HE LOOKS PRETTY *SPRY* TO ME.

MAYBE YOU'LL DO A BETTER JOB WITH ME *SUPERVISING.*

BEFORE YOU DISINTEGRATE HIM, THOUGH, LET'S FIND OUT WHO KEEPS SENDING THESE SNOOPS OUR WAY.

VVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVVV

HEY, GUYS. NICE DIGS.

IT'S GOT A REAL HANGAR 18 AESTHETIC.

BUT LET'S SKIP THE WHOLE PROBE ROUTINE AND GO STRAIGHT TO YOU SURRENDERING AND HANDING OVER THE HOSTAGES.

YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

A SWORD?

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA DO WITH THAT?

LET ME SHOW YOU!

YEEEEAAARRGH!

THE SWORD BELONGS TO A *FRIEND* OF MINE.

IT'S NOT ALTOGETHER PART OF THIS WORLD. MADE ME WONDER IF IT COULD *HURT* A GUY LIKE YOU.

HKK!

EVEN BETTER...

...IT'LL ACT AS A *BEACON.*

SHOW ME THE BASE VILLAINS WHO HOPE TO PROFIT FROM THE CREATION OF THEIR OWN HEL!

THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE SMART TO BRING A LITTLE *BACKUP.*

IN THIS CASE...MY *GIRLFRIEND...*

...VALKYRIE.

"GIRLFRIEND?"

UH... AHEM...

OKAY, AWKWARD.

I DIDN'T EVEN MEAN IT THAT WAY. IT JUST SORT OF SLIPPED OUT.

AND NOW'S NOT THE TIME TO SWEAT THE *PUBLIC HUMILIATION*.

THE U-FOES HAVE US OUTGUNNED AND OUTNUMBERED...AND THEY HAVE A STOREHOUSE FULL OF HIGH-TECH WEAPONS.

WHEN DR. DOOM HAS A WET DREAM, IT PROBABLY LOOKS LIKE THIS.

SHAKE IT OFF. ROLL WITH IT.

CEREBRAL PORT

AS I WAS SAYING...

...LET'S SEE HOW YOU GUYS HANDLE THE FURY OF--

--MY FRIEND WITH BENEFITS!

X-RAY... IRONCLAD... VAPOR!

SHOW THESE FOOLS WHO THEY'RE SCREWING WITH!

TAKE THE FIGHT TO THEM.

COME OUT SWINGING.

HARD.

BUT DON'T FORGET WHY YOU'RE HERE.

FIND THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ABDUCTED...FIND A WAY TO GET THEM OUT OF HERE... SAVE AS MANY OF THEM AS YOU CAN.

FIND--

KATY!

VENOM!
THE U-FOES ARE NOT TO BE TRIFLED WITH!
THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE WILL SERVE US FOR ONLY SO LONG.
UNNFF!
WE NEED TO BE ELSEWHERE BEFORE THEY RECOVER.
THE HOSTAGES?
THERE ARE A HALF-DOZEN OF THEM WHO ARE STILL BREATHING.
BUT THERE'S NO WAY I CAN GET THEM FREE BEFORE WE GET DOGPILED.
COMING HERE LIKE THIS...IT MAY HAVE BEEN... IMPULSIVE.
WHAT CAN I SAY? RECKLESSNESS IS A GIFT.
OH, ENOUGH OF THIS!

THOR-RAAAAA

CAN'T GO DOWN LIKE THIS...CAN'T LET THE U-FOES HAVE THIS TECH...THESE WEAPONS...

CAN'T...LET THESE HOSTAGES...KATY... CAN'T LET THEM BE USED LIKE...LAB RATS...

I...

I CAN'T...

NO. YOU CAN'T.

BUT ME...

I CAN DO WHATEVER I WANT!

VENOM #30
"THE UNWANTED"

Philadelphia, PA.

I WISH I COULD SAY I *REMEMBERED* HOW I SAVED THE DAY.

BUT AFTER THE *U-FOES* HIT US WITH THAT WHAMMY-WAVE OR WHATEVER IT WAS, I GUESS I WAS RUNNING ON *AUTOPILOT*.

TOO BAD.

I BET I WAS A *SIGHT TO BEHOLD*.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO *KILL* THIS ANNOYING LITTLE *COCKROACH?*

X-RAY... IRONCLAD... VAPOR--

--FULL *POWER.* AND SLAUGHTER HIM!

MMM... THE BLOODLUST... THAT FEAR... *STINKS* SO GOOD!

I THINK YOU *BROKE* SOMETHING IN HIS *HEAD* WHEN YOU *BLASTED* HIM, VECTOR.

YOU HEAR THE WAY HE'S *TALKING?* DOESN'T EVEN SOUND LIKE THE *SAME* GUY!

I DON'T CARE WHO HE *IS*...

HE'S *SPIDER-MAN* IN A *MONSTER* MASK!

AND WE'RE THE @#!% U-FOES!

HE SHOULD BE *DEAD* ALREADY!

KRRAAA-KOW!

THE *SYMBIOTE* I WEAR IS A LIVING THING...ALBEIT A CHEMICALLY *LOBOTOMIZED* THING.

COME HERE, *FLESH-SACKS!*

AND I'M... *INFECTED*, I GUESS...

...WITH THE *DEMON* THAT'S TRAPPED INSIDE ME...HELPLESS AND UNABLE TO ACT.

BUT SOMETHING HOPPED INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT WHILE I WAS TAKING A NAP.

SO THE QUESTION IS...IS IT THE DEMON OR THE SYMBIOTE?

KEEAAGHH!!

OR IS IT *BOTH?*

I'M THE FIRST TO ADMIT, I DON'T REALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT ALIEN SYMBIOTES.

AND I KNOW EVEN *LESS* ABOUT DEMONS.

AAAAAAAA--

HELL...IT WASN'T LONG AGO THAT I MIGHT NOT HAVE KNOWN THE *DIFFERENCE* BETWEEN THE TWO.

WHO KNOWS IF THE TWO OF THEM GET *ALONG* WITH EACH OTHER?

WHO KNOWS *HOW LONG* THE TWO OF THEM HAVE BEEN RUNNING AROUND LIKE THIS WHEN I LET MY GUARD DOWN?

SPLAK!

HERE'S THE *THING*, THOUGH.

IF I *DIE*, BOTH OF THEM--THE DEMON *AND* THE SYMBIOTE--WOULD BE *FREE*, RIGHT?

AND IF THAT'S THE CASE, WHY DIDN'T THEY JUST *ROLL* OVER AND LET THE U-FOES HAVE THEIR WAY?

MAYBE THE THRILL OF UNLEASHING SO MUCH CHAOS IS SIMPLY TOO *DELICIOUS* TO PASS UP.

MAYBE ONE--OR *BOTH*--OF THEM *LOVE* IT.

MAYBE THEY'RE JUST HOLDING OUT FOR THE *NEXT TIME* THEY GET TO CUT LOOSE.

GET... GET IT OFF!

EATING ME!

IT... IT'S IN MY HEAD!

WHAT THE HELL?

THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE *OUR* HIRED DRONES!

IT'S HIM! VENOM!

HE'S CONTROLLING THEM!

HE CAN DO THAT?

SHZZZZ-SSHRAKKOW!

HEHEHEHEH.

THOMPSON. YOU WASTED SO MUCH *POTENTIAL*.

SO MANY NEW TOYS TO PLAY WITH!

EEEAAGGHH!

PLEASE! PLEASE *NO*! GGGGGG

nnnnH.

WHAT...

WHAT DEVILTRY IS THIS?

venom?

I'M A LITTLE PREOCCUPIED RIGHT NOW, HOTPANTS...

...BUT STICK AROUND...

I'VE BEEN FEELING A LITTLE *PENT-UP* LATELY.

THAT...

...WAS PROFOUNDLY *CREEPY.*

YOU KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE A *BAD DREAM*...AND I MEAN A *REALLY* BAD ONE...BUT YOU CAN'T REMEMBER IT WHEN YOU WAKE UP?

VRRR

HOPE YOU DON'T MIND ME COMMANDEERING ALL YOUR WEAPONS AND YOUR HENCH-MEN LIKE THIS--

TANK!

TANK!

TANK!

IF IT'S ANY CONSOLATION... NONE OF THEM REALLY LIKED YOU ALL THAT MUCH.

A FEW OF THEM WERE ALREADY PLANNING ON BETRAYING YOU.

I CAN SEE IT IN THEIR MINDS.

FIND YOUR LEGS, KATY KIERNAN.

I NEED YOUR HELP.

WAIT...

WHO'RE YOU?

VALKYRIE. OF THE VALKYRIOR.

NOW *HELP*. THIS WAREHOUSE IS COMING DOWN AROUND OUR EARS.

HELP ME TO SET THE OTHER SURVIVORS FREE!

Y-YEAH.

AND *THEN* WHAT?

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE WHILE YOU WERE GLUING ON THOSE METAL BREASTPLATES...WE'RE *TRAPPED* HERE.

THEY'VE GOT THE PLACE SURROUNDED BY AN INTERDIMENSIONAL FORCE--

YOU WERE SAYING?

ARAGORN!

TWEEEEEEE

SARAKWA-THOOM

THIS WAY!

NICE RIDE, BUT WHAT ABOUT--

VENOM.

THAT'S IT!

GOT HIM!

FZZZ-ZOW!

YEEAAGGK!

NICE SHOOTING, X-RAY!

NOW...

...LET'S SEE HOW TOUGH HE IS AFTER A LITTLE *TENDERIZING.*

SKLAM!

DON'T HAVE TO BE *TOUGH.*

HEHEHEHEH...

JUST HAVE TO BE *SMARTER* THAN YOU.

OF COURSE... HAVING ACCESS TO ALL YOUR TECH...

...AND CONTROL OF THE GUYS WHO KNOW HOW TO RUN IT...

...DOESN'T HURT.

DOESN'T HURT *ME*, AT LEAST.

WHAT ARE YOU--

THEY'RE ACTIVATING THE *TRANSDUCTION* EQUIPMENT!

BLAST THEM! STOP THEM--

KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK

--BEFORE IT'S TOO--

KKKKKKKKKKKKKKKK

--LATE--

KKKKKKKKKKKKKKK

Soon...

WHERE IS HE? IT'S BEEN HOURS.

WHERE'S VENOM?

I DO NOT KNOW.

HE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO FIND HIS WAY OUT.

AND EVEN IF HE DOES, IT MIGHT BE--

AND THAT'S WHY YOU'VE STILL GOT YOUR SPEAR IN HAND, RIGHT?

WHERE ARE WE? WHAT HAPPENED?

HAS ANYONE SEEN MY WIFE?

UH...LOOK, EVERYONE, STAY CALM!

YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW.

EVERYONE'S ALL RIGHT.

DON'T BE SO SURE--

H-HEY.

...DID I MISS ANYTHING?

'TIS YOU.

I MEAN THE *REAL* YOU...

...ISN'T IT?

DOES THE REAL ME FEEL LIKE HE'S BEEN MICROWAVED, THEN FED THROUGH A HAMBURGER PRESS, THEN MICROWAVED AGAIN?

BECAUSE, YEAH. I'M *THAT* GUY.

WAIT A SEC.

YOU'RE OUT HERE. I GET THAT. YAY, TEAM.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE *U-FOES?*

I...

...I DON'T KNOW.

"I GUESS I SENT THEM *PACKING.*"

SO...

PHILADELPHIA, HUH?

THOSE PEOPLE *NEEDED* YOU.

YOU *RESCUED* THEM.

SO YOU SAID EARLIER. BUT IT WAS *YOU* WHO GOT THEM OUT OF THERE.

I WAS JUST ROUGHING UP THE BAD GUYS.

AND EVEN *THAT* WASN'T ME.

I MEAN... I DON'T REMEMBER *ANY* OF IT.

AND... WHOEVER IT WAS...IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY DID A *BETTER JOB* THAN I'VE *EVER* DONE.

WAY TO GO, FLASH... A *MONSTER* IS BETTER AT RESCUING PEOPLE THAN YOU ARE.

DO YOU THINK THOSE PEOPLE *CARED* WHO SAVED THEM?

ALL THAT MATTERS TO THEM IS THAT THEY ARE BACK HOME...

...WATCHING RERUNS AND EATING LEFTOVERS WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

IF YOU HADN'T SHOWN UP... WITH YOUR SYMBIOTE... WITH A DEMON... WHATEVER...THAT WOULDN'T BE THE CASE.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO *DIDN'T* MAKE IT OUT?

GET THERE *SOONER* NEXT TIME.

BESIDES...THIS IS FAR FROM OVER.

A LOT OF THE TECH THE U-FOES WERE TOYING WITH... IT'S STILL OUT THERE.

IT'S STILL ON THE *STREETS.*

SINCE I'VE KNOWN YOU, YOU'VE WANTED TO BE A *HERO*...TO MAKE A *DIFFERENCE.*

YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIND YOUR *PLACE* IN THE WORLD.

MAYHAP YOU FOUND IT TONIGHT.

BUT...

...IF I DO THIS...

...I'LL BE DOING IT *ALONE,* WON'T I?

IT'S NOT LIKE EITHER ONE OF YOU STUCK AROUND FOR LONG AFTER WE CLEANED THIS MESS UP.

AND I'M *NOT* BLAMING YOU.

WE'VE ALL GOT THINGS TO DO.

IT JUST MIGHT'VE BEEN NICE TO *TALK* TO SOMEONE, NOT MYSELF AND DUPED SYMBIOTE PUPPETS.

AH.

FORGET IT.

GOOD TALK, GUYS.

A FRESH START

SOUNDS NICE. SOUNDS LIKE WHAT I *NEED*.

UNLESS I SCREW IT UP... AGAIN.

HEH.

A MAN AND HIS SYMBIOTE...

...*AND* HIS DEMON.

SOONER OR LATER, BOYS...

...WE NEED TO HAVE A *CHAT*.

Brooklyn, NY.

BUSHWICK.

SWAT

PHILADELPHIA POLICE

INTEL PUTS OUR TARGET INSIDE RIGHT THIS VERY SECOND.

HE'S ALONE, BUT WE SHOULD ASSUME HE IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS.

ONE SHOT. NO MISTAKES.

AS SOON AS THE DOOR COMES DOWN, OUR TARGET'S GONNA MAKE A BREAK FOR IT.

WE GO IN FAST AND HARD.

WE'RE TAKING NO CHANCES.

YOU SEE A CHANCE TO PUT HIM DOWN-- TAKE IT.

SHMASH!

STAY TIGHT.

GAH!

WHAT AM I *SMELLING*?!

IT WAS THE SMELL...

...TIPPED NEIGHBORS OFF THAT SOMETHING...

...MIGHT NOT BE RIGHT...

OH, GOD.

THERE MUST BE *DOZENS* OF THEM...

IT'S SOME SORT OF *TROPHY ROOM!*

WHOEVER THESE GUYS ARE...THEY'VE BEEN TORN APART.

...AND A BUNCH OF THEM ARE WEARING *MASKS.*

WE NEED A FORENSICS TEAM...

WE NEED BACKUP...

WE NEED...

WHAT THE--

YOU KNOW... IT'S NOT *NICE* TO BARGE INTO SOMEONE'S HOUSE WITHOUT KNOCKING...

BUT I GUESS YOU WERE *EAGER* TO GET A FIRSTHAND PEEK AT OUR *HANDIWORK*.

ALL THOSE CRIMINALS AND GANG MEMBERS AND PUSHERS AND LEG-BREAKERS-FOR-HIRE.

YOU CAN *THANK* ME LATER.

AND--HEY-- IF YOU WANNA PUT ME ON THE *PAYROLL*, WE CAN DISCUSS THAT, TOO.

BUT I'VE GOT SOME *PERSONAL BUSINESS* TO ATTEND TO BEFORE I CAN ENTERTAIN ANY PERMANENT WORK.

EDDIE BROCK!

VENOM!

NO, NO, NO.

YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG.

VENOM'S OLD NEWS... ALL PLAYED OUT.

THESE DAYS I PREFER TO BE CALLED--

--TOXIN!

VENOM #31
"DAY ONE"

Philadelphia, PA.
NOW.
MOVING DAY.
WHO WOULD'VE GUESSED OLD *FOOTBALL* TROPHIES AND *RATTY* CONCERT TEES WOULD TAKE UP SO MANY *BOXES?*
OKAY...
...THAT'S THE LAST OF 'EM, MR. THOMPSON.
UH...YOU GOT SOMEONE TO *HELP* YOU UNPACK ALL THIS STUFF, RIGHT?
NOPE. I'M ON MY *OWN.*
ARMY
UP
OH, HEY... I DIDN'T *MEAN...*
BUT DON'T WORRY. I'LL PUT EVERYTHING IN THE *EASY-TO-REACH* CABINETS.
RIIIIGHT.
FORGET IT, MAN.
I'M JUST *MESSING* WITH YOU.
I DIDN'T NEED TO BE *RUDE* TO THE GUY. HE WAS JUST TRYING TO BE NICE.
LATELY, MY NERVES HAVE BEEN AT SURFACE LEVEL.
I'M BARELY EATING...BARELY SLEEPING. I'M *TIRED.*

AND I'VE GOT A *LOT* OF UNPACKING TO DO.

bedroo

ALONE.

LEAVE IT TO ME TO PULL UP STAKES AND MOVE TO A CITY WHERE I DON'T KNOW *ANYONE.*

SOUNDED LIKE A *GOOD* IDEA AT THE TIME...BUT IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE SOMEONE TO CALL WITH SOME OF THE *HEAVY LIFTING.*

ARMY

MAYBE IF THIS OL' FLASH THOMPSON CHARM CAN GET ONE OF MY NEIGHBORS TO--

HOW'S A GUY SUPPOSED TO GET SOME *SLEEP* WITH ALL THAT @#$%#@% STOMPING AROUND?

SOME OF US WORK THE @#$%#@% NIGHT SHIFT!

WOULD IT HURT YOU @#$% TO HAVE A LITTLE *COMMON COURTESY* AND KEEP THE NOISE LEVELS TO A #$%& MINIMUM?!

UH...

HEY...

I'M YOUR NEW NEIGHBOR... FLASH.

SORRY ABOUT THE RACKET.

ARMY

THOSE MOVERS OF YOURS MADE ENOUGH "RACKET" TO WAKE THE DEAD!

MAYBE YOU DRAW DISABILITY OR WHATEVER, BUT I WORK FOR A LIVING!

IF I OVERSLEEP... IF I'M LATE FOR WORK...IT'S YOUR ASS, "FLASH."

AND DON'T THINK THAT @#$%#@% CHAIR IS GONNA EARN YOU ANY SLACK FROM ME.

SLAM!

WOW.

NICE TO MEET YOU, TOO.

YOU'RE THE NEW GUY, HUH?

AND I SEE YOU MET MR. FRICKS.

GUESS I DID.

YOU GET USED TO HIM.

HE'S ALWAYS YELLING ABOUT SOMETHING.

AND BETWEEN YOU AND ME, HE ALMOST NEVER GETS TO WORK ANYHOW.

SURE, HE PLANS TO GO TO WORK, BUT HE NEVER GETS FURTHER THAN McGINTEY'S PUB.

THANKS FOR THE TIP.

NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M FLASH THOMPSON.

DO YOU GO TO TO WEST PHILLY HIGH? I JUST GOT HIRED IN THEIR P.E. DEPARTMENT.

ARMY

WHATEVER.

I GOT PLACES TO BE.

LOOK AT YOU, FLASH. MAKING *FRIENDS* ALREADY.

I WONDER IF THE MOVERS HAVE PULLED AWAY YET. MAYBE IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO ASK THEM TO PACK EVERYTHING BACK UP.

WELCOME TO PHILLY.

THIS IS GOING TO BE--

kitchen stuff

MENDER'S MOVING

PARK

PUB

HIT MONKEY

--AWESOME!

BEST ACTION MOVIE I'VE SEEN IN *FOREVER!*

New York City.

THEN.

THIS SCENE TAKES PLACE BEFORE ASM #698-700--TOM.

REALLY? THE *BEST?* I DON'T KNOW IF I'D GO THAT FAR, FLASH.

I MEAN...HERE'S THIS GROUP OF MERCENARIES RIGHT IN THE THICK OF THINGS...AND THEY *ALL* MAKE IT OUT WITHOUT A SCRATCH?

WHAT CAN I SAY, PETE?

I *LIKE* STORIES WHERE THE GOOD GUYS *WIN.*

AND, HEY...THANKS FOR MAKING THE TIME.

I MEAN, HOW OFTEN DO WE GET TO HANG OUT LIKE THIS?

NOT NEARLY ENOUGH.

YOU KNOW, FLASH, NO ONE'S GONNA *BLAME* YOU IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT MOVING.

I APPRECIATE THAT.

BUT MY MIND'S MADE UP.

I NEED THIS. I NEED THIS CHANGE.

BUT I'M GONNA *MISS* YOU, PETE.

...YOU TOO, FLASH.

JUST DO ME A FAVOR...

"...TRY TO STAY OUT OF *TROUBLE* OUT THERE IN THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE."

TROUBLE.

LITTLE DOES *OL' PUNY PARKER* KNOW, BUT IT WAS *TROUBLE* THAT BROUGHT ME TO PHILLY IN THE *FIRST* PLACE.

AND I CAN'T WAIT TO GET OUT ON THE TOWN AND GO *LOOKING* FOR *SOME!*

JUST GETTING MY FEET WET, REALLY, LIMITING MY BEAT TO JUST A FEW CITY BLOCKS FOR THE TIME BEING.

PATROLLING... THAT'S WHAT HONEST-TO-GOODNESS *SUPER HEROES* DO.

AND IN ANY CITY, I HATE IT.

BAR

G'NIGHT, BIG JAY.

SAME TIME TOMORROW NIGHT.

ON THE BEST OF NIGHTS, IT'S *BORING* AS HELL.

IN THE WAY THAT BEING A PEEPING TOM CREEPER IS BOTH DULL *AND* SKEEVY.

AND ON THE BAD NIGHTS...THE *BUSY* NIGHTS...YOU GET TO SEE THE *VERY WORST* PEOPLE HAVE TO OFFER.

...SHOW YOU...

...YOU DAMN TEASE...

...CAN'T LEAD PEOPLE ON LIKE THAT...

...CUT YOU FROM BELLY TO NECK...

I'M NOT ASHAMED TO ADMIT IT, THOUGH.

THE BAD NIGHTS ARE MORE *FUN*.

UH... AH... UH...

SKL-KGK-SLK!

YEEEAAAARRRRRR—

—RRGGG

MISSING

IGHTMAN

COMES

MISSING

HEY, LADY!

BAD PEOPLE OUT TONIGHT.

GET HOME QUICK!

PHILLY'S NOT LIKE NEW YORK. IT'S NOT CRAWLING WITH *SUPER HEROES.*

FIGURED THIS IS A PLACE I COULD ACTUALLY DO SOME *GOOD* FOR A CHANGE.

MAYBE I CAN MAKE A *DIFFERENCE* HERE.

YEEAAAARRRRGGGHH

OF COURSE, IF *AGENT VENOM* SHOWS UP IN PHILLY AROUND THE SAME TIME OL' FLASH THOMPSON MAKES HIS MOVE...WELL...

WHUF!

...MY FRIENDS ARE SUPER GENIUSES AND ACE REPORTERS...

FWWUMP!

...THEY'D PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER.

VENOM CAN'T GO *TOO PUBLIC.*

PLEASE DON'T KILL ME.

PLEASE DON'T KILL ME.

PLEASE...

SHUT UP!

GUY SMELLS LIKE A *BREWERY.*

IT'S A *STINK* I KNOW ALL TOO WELL.

LISTEN TO ME!

P-PLEASE...

...I WASN'T GONNA...

I COULD TURN YOUR SKULL INSIDE OUT WITHOUT EVEN THINKING ABOUT IT.

AND THEN DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'D DO?

EAT YOUR BRAINS!

NNN-NNN-NN

YOU WANT TO *LIVE?* HERE'S WHAT YOU'RE GONNA DO.

YOU'RE GONNA TURN YOURSELF IN... GET HELP...

I'M GONNA BE ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR YOU...*ALWAYS*... FROM HERE ON OUT.

I'VE GOT YOUR *SCENT*.

...AND IF I *SMELL* YOU IN *MY* NEIGHBORHOOD AGAIN...

POLICE! HELP!

NOM-NOM-NOM.

I COULD'VE PUT HIM IN TRACTION... BROKEN EVERY BONE IN HIS BODY.

PART OF ME *WANTS* TO.

BUT THIS IS A NEW START FOR ME... A NEW HEROIC PHILOSOPHY...AND THAT MEANS I HAVE TO BE--

--BETTER?

ROSE MANOR

Rose Manor Wellness Center, Middletown, NY.

THEN:

I'M SORRY, SON. I WAS MILES AWAY.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

I ASKED IF YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE GETTING ANY *BETTER* HERE.

THE ANXIETY...THE NIGHT TERRORS... ARE THEY...

WORSE THAN EVER.

I CAN'T CLOSE MY EYES AT NIGHT WITHOUT SEEING THAT...

...*THING*.

MOM...

...I KNOW IT MIGHT SEEM LIKE I'M *ABANDONING* YOU.

BUT YOU'RE *NOT* ALONE.

PHILADELPHIA'S NOT THAT FAR.

I'LL VISIT.

AND IF YOU EVER NEED ANYTHING, I'LL BE HERE.

YOU JUST NEED TO REMEMBER SOMETHING FOR ME, ALL RIGHT?

IT'S *IMPORTANT*.

"THE MONSTERS *CAN'T* HURT YOU ANYMORE."

LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT, RAFE.

YOUR COUSIN *ENZO* HERE...HE RUNS FOR US.

HE'S HEARD THE STORIES.

PEOPLE DISAPPEARING RIGHT OFF THE STREET AT NIGHT.

HE KNOWS IT'S SAFER IF HE'S GOT SOMEBODY WATCHING HIS BACK.

MISSING

MISSING

BUT YOU'RE *TOO GOOD* FOR US.

IS THAT IT?

N-NO.

C'MON, RAFE.

ENZO CAN DO *WHATEVER* HE WANTS.

I JUST... I JUST DON'T WANT TO JOIN YOUR GANG.

AIN'T NOBODY SAID *ANYTHING* ABOUT YOU *"JOINING THE GANG."*

BUT YOU'RE GONNA DO WHAT WE WANT JUST THE SAME.

HEY!

LET GO!

AAAGH!!

DON'T!

DON'T HURT HIM, RUDEBOY!

YOU GIVING ORDERS NOW?

THERE'S A PRICE TO PAY FOR DISRESPECT.

WHAP!

ENOUGH!

YAAGHH!

RELEASE THE CHILDREN AND BE GONE FROM THIS PLACE!

OOF!

I HAVE CLAIMED THESE STREETS AS MY DOMAIN!

AND YOU TRESPASS IN THE REALM OF--

SMASH!

HAIL MARY!

THE MOTHER SUPERIOR OF PUNISHMENT!

WHAT THE--?!

IT...IT'S A MONSTER!

A DEVIL!

A DEVIL COME FOR US!

HOLY--!

I'M OUTTA HERE!

YES! RUN! RUN!

I'VE COME FOR YOUR SOULS!

HEH.

HA.

HA.

HAHA HAHAHAHA HAHA

"HAIL MARY! MOTHER SUPERIOR OF PUNISHMENT!"

HAHA HAHA

OH.

THAT'S GOOD.

SO...VENOM HAS TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE.

SUITS ME JUST FINE.

I'M DOING THIS TO *HELP* PEOPLE...NOT TO GET *FAMOUS*.

DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T ENTERTAIN MYSELF ALONG THE WAY.

MISSING

FIRST NIGHT ON PATROL.

THIS ONE'S GOING DOWN AS A *WIN*...

...AND I'LL BE BACK HOME JUST IN TIME TO START UNPACKING...

...AND START SHOOTING UP.

HENRY McCOY...BEAST... GAVE ME THE MEDICINE I'D NEED TO KEEP THE SYMBIOTE DOPED UP AND UNDER CONTROL.

THE AVENGERS *TRUST* ME ON MY OWN.

I *EARNED* THAT TRUST.

BUT I'M DOING ALL RIGHT.

STILL IN CHARGE.

SYMBIOTE'S STILL ON A TIGHT LEASH.

AND I'M NOT STICKING THAT NEEDLE IN MY ARM UNLESS I NEED TO.

NEED TO UNPACK...TO CLEAN UP...BUT I'M *EXHAUSTED*.

NEED TO FIGURE OUT A ROUTINE THAT ALLOWS FOR CRIME-FIGHTING *AND* A DAY JOB.

HEH.

A DAY JOB.

CAREFUL THERE, FLASH...

"...OR YOU MIGHT JUST START TO FEEL LIKE A *NORMAL* PERSON AGAIN."

UPS

Then.

UH...HEY... BETTY.

I HOPE YOU GET THIS MESSAGE.

I THOUGHT WE HAD A DATE...UH...NOT A DATE...BUT YOU KNOW...

I THOUGHT WE WERE GONNA MEET UP...

...SO I COULD SAY *GOODBYE.*

MAYBE THIS IS AS CLOSE AS I'M GONNA GET, HUH?

SO...

"...GOODBYE."

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

HNH!

KNOCK KNOCK

I'M AWAKE...I'M AWAKE.

IT'S THE *POLICE*, SIR. WE'D LIKE TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOU.

I'LL BE RIGHT--

--THERE.

WHAT THE...? HOW DID THE BOXES...

SORRY.

TOOK ME A SECOND TO SHAKE THE COBWEBS OUT.

WE APOLOGIZE FOR WAKING YOU, SIR.

NO, IT'S FINE.

HOW CAN I HELP YOU, OFFICERS?

SIR, WE WERE WONDERING IF YOU HEARD ANY DISTURBANCES IN THE LAST COUPLE OF HOURS.

N-NO.

BUT I GUESS I'M A PRETTY DEEP SLEEPER.

1G

IT APPEARS YOUR NEIGHBOR, ROBERT FRICKS, MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE VICTIM OF SOME SORT OF *HOME INVASION.*

MR. FRICKS HAS BEEN HOSPITALIZED...AND IT MIGHT BE SOME TIME BEFORE HE REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS.

WE'RE NOT SURE WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED, OF COURSE, BUT WE'RE TALKING TO EVERYONE IN THE BUILDING AS WE TRY TO PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER.

OH, MAN.

I'VE BEEN HOME FOR HOURS, BUT I... I DIDN'T HEAR A THING.

I...I DIDN'T DO THIS, DID I?

I ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER.

AND IT SCARES THE HELL OUT OF ME.

New York City.
NOW.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

C'MON FLASH. OPEN UP.

EXCUSE ME?

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR *EUGENE*, HE DOESN'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE.

IS THAT SO?

HE STARTED A NEW JOB IN *PHILADELPHIA* OR SOMETHING.

HE WAS ALWAYS SUCH A GOOD NEIGHBOR. IT'S *TOO BAD*, REALLY.

YEAH. YOU'RE RIGHT.

IT *IS* TOO BAD, JUST LIKE YOU SAID.

TOO BAD I MISSED HIM.

I JUST *HATE* THAT HE SKIPPED TOWN LIKE THAT...

...WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A GOODBYE FOR HIS OL' PAL *EDDIE*.

VENOM #32
"TOXIC LIFESTYLE"

EDWARD BROCK...WHEN I FIRST ENCOUNTERED OUR MUTUAL FRIEND AGENT VENOM...

AZARD

...I SAW PROFIT. I IMMEDIATELY SET OUT TO FIND AND MONETIZE ONE OF THESE ALIEN SYMBIOTES.

AND NOW THAT WE HAVE OUR SYMBIOTE, WE ONLY NEED ONE THING...

...A HOST...

N-NO!

NEEEEAAAGGGH!

PLEASE, GOD!

NOT AGAIN!

NOT--

--GOING TO--

KILL--

--VENOM!

HEY, BUDDY. WAKE UP!

BEEN TRYING TO *WAKE* YOU FOR A COUPLE OF MINUTES.

MUST'VE BEEN SOME *GOOD DREAM* YOU WERE HAVING!

Y-YEAH.

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

ANYHOW.

THIS IS YOUR STOP.

IT'S THE END OF THE ROAD, MR. BROCK.

YEAH.

95 NORTH Philadelphia

676 Or Plymouth Meeting EXIT ONLY

SURE IS.

CLEAN SHAVE... BUTTON-UP SHIRT...BROWN BAG LUNCH...

AM I EUGENE "FLASH" THOMPSON, RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC...

...DARK VIGILANTE, AVENGER WITH A BROKEN WING?

OR AM I *JOE McCUBICLE* OF THE PUNCH-CLOCK McCUBICLES?

WHO I *REALLY* AM IS THE GUY WHO CAN'T AFFORD THIS NEW APARTMENT IN THIS NEW CITY ON A SUPER HERO'S SALARY.

BUT...MORE THAN THAT... I JUST NEED TO GET OUT AND ABOUT...TO DO SOMETHING *NORMAL* FOR A CHANGE.

YOU'VE REACHED THE VOICEMAIL OF KATY KIERNAN.

I'M NOT HERE RIGHT NOW, BUT IF YOU'VE MARRIED THE JERSEY DEVIL OR HAVE RECENTLY BEEN ABDUCTED BY ALIENS, PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE.

HEY... *KATY.*

IT'S ME...UH... *VENOM.*

JUST WANTED TO CHECK IN WITH YOU. HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU SINCE THE...UH...SINCE THAT *THING* WITH THE *U-FOES.*

WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE *ALL RIGHT.*

NOT TO MENTION...YOU'RE THE CLOSEST THING I'VE GOT TO A *FRIEND* RIGHT NOW.

CAN'T CALL *MOM.* SHE DOESN'T HAVE A PHONE IN HER ROOM AT THE WELLNESS CENTER.

VALKYRIE HATES CELL PHONES. SHE PREFERS "*ONLY TO ANSWER THE CALL OF VALOR.*"

WHATEVER THAT MEANS.

OUT OF NOWHERE, *PARKER* STOPPED RETURNING MY CALLS.

BUT, HEY...I'M SURE I'LL MAKE FRIENDS AT WORK.

RIIIIIGHT.

"HI! NICE TO MEET YOU!

"I'M FLASH THOMPSON.

"I HAVE A MURDEROUS **ALIEN SYMBIOTE** IN MY BLOOD-STREAM.

"BUT DON'T WORRY.

"I KEEP THE MONSTER IN CHECK WITH A STEADY DOSE OF DRUGS SUPPLIED TO ME BY A FURRY, BLUE MUTANT **MAN-BEAST.**

"AND MY STORIES ABOUT SECRET GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO CREATE SUPER-SOLDIERS ARE THE LIFE OF ANY PARTY!

"WANNA HANG OUT SOMETIME?"

I HOPE YOU'RE ***READY*** FOR THIS, THOMPSON.

BECAUSE... FAIR WARNING...

THIS MIGHT FEEL A LITTLE *WEIRD*.

I THINK WE'RE *PAST* WEIRD, DOC.

GOD AND COUNTRY, RIGHT?

A LITTLE STICK.

BUT DON'T BREATHE EASY JUST YET. THAT'S JUST *ANTIBIOTICS*.

BEFORE WE'RE THROUGH, YOUR BLOOD WILL BE FULL OF ALL THE SYMBIOTE-CONTROLLING *CHEMICALS* A GROWING BOY COULD WANT.

YEAH...

...WAAAAAAAY PAST WEIRD.

JUST IN CASE.

PROBABLY SHOULD JUST INJECT THE MEDS AND BE DONE WITH IT FOR A WHILE.

BUT I'M NOT READY YET.

I STILL FEEL LIKE I'M IN CONTROL.

I'M IN *CHARGE*...

...AND *HUNGOVER*...

...EVEN THOUGH I HAVEN'T HAD A DRINK IN...I CAN'T REMEMBER HOW LONG.

GOTTA SHAKE IT OFF, THOUGH. I KNOW THE *ROUTINE*.

HIDE HOW I'M FEELING.

MAKE A GOOD *FIRST IMPRESSION*.

ALL RIGHT, FOLKS. PAY ATTENTION.

West Philadelphia High School.

WE'VE GOT A NEW ASSISTANT COACH JOINING THE STAFF TODAY.

I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE COACH THOMPSON.

THANKS, COACH YATES.

UH...HI, EVERYONE.

OH, COME ON.

WHAT'S THIS GUY GONNA COACH? SPECIAL OLYMPICS?

I EXPECT--

--YOU'LL SHOW COACH THOMPSON THE SAME *RESPECT* YOU SHOW ME.

I APPRECIATE THE SENTIMENT, BUT COACH YATES KNOWS AS WELL AS I DO THAT RESPECT HAS TO BE *EARNED*.

ALL RIGHT.
TEN LAPS AROUND THE GYM.
LET'S GO!
I KNEW WHEN A.J. HOOKED ME UP WITH THIS JOB, IT WASN'T GOING TO BE *EASY*.
TEENAGERS KNOW A *PITY PARTY* WHEN THEY SEE ONE, UNLESS YOU PROVE THEM WRONG.
I SURE WASN'T ANY DIFFERENT THAN THE BMOC OVER HERE.
YOU ALL RIGHT?
YOU GOT THIS?
Y-YEAH. I'LL BE *FINE*.
GOOD.
I'LL BE IN MY *OFFICE* THEN.
GIVE 'EM HELL... *COACH*.
SMALL WORLD.
I *RECOGNIZE* THAT KID. SAVED HIM FROM A BEATING JUST LAST NIGHT.

AND HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE.

ONE OF MY NEW *NEIGHBORS*... SITTING WITH THE BURNOUT BRIGADE.

HEY!

FANCY MEETING YOU HERE.

DIDN'T CATCH YOUR *NAME* WHEN WE MET YESTERDAY.

YEAH... UH...

...IT'S *ANDI*...

GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, ANDI.

I GUESS YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF *DRESSING OUT* FOR P.E.?

"DRESSING OUT"?

IS THAT WHAT THEY CALLED IT WHEN YOU WERE IN SCHOOL?

HOW *OLD* ARE YOU, *FORTY*?

BECAUSE ME...I JUST CALL IT GETTING *TIRED* AND *SWEATY* FIRST THING IN THE MORNING...

...FEELING *GROSS* THE REST OF THE DAY...AND THAT'S IF YOU DON'T CATCH SOME MILDEW-RELATED *DISEASE* IN THE LOCKER ROOM SHOWERS...

...AND I JUST DON'T SEE THE POINT.

HEY, "COACH"!

THOSE *BURNOUTS* DON'T NEED SOMEONE TO SHOW THEM HOW TO *SIT* IN A CHAIR ALL DAY, THEY GOT THAT COVERED.

BESIDES, I'M ABOUT TO *BEAT* MY TOP TIME AROUND THE GYM!

C'MON, WATCH!

SO *THAT'S* WHAT I WAS LIKE IN HIGH SCHOOL...

GUESS THAT GUY IS THE SCHOOL'S RESIDENT JOCK, HUH?

HIM?

YEAH, THAT'S *DARIUS FOWLER*. WEST PHILLY'S *"ALL-STAR."*

CALLS HIMSELF *"THE FRANCHISE"* BECAUSE...

...I DUNNO... BECAUSE HE'S *STUPID?*

GUESS EVERY SCHOOL'S GOT A GUY LIKE HIM.

YEAH...

...GUESS SO.

ONE DAY DOWN. FEELS LIKE A WEEK.

TIME FOR THE NIGHT JOB.

STILL DON'T KNOW MY WAY AROUND THE CITY...BUT I DON'T HAVE THE LUXURY OF A GUIDED TOUR.

A COUPLE OF WEEKS BACK, I BUSTED UP A BUNCH OF CRIMINALS WHO HAD UNCOVERED A CACHE OF *EXPERIMENTAL WEAPONS*.

REALLY *STRANGE* STUFF.

BEFORE I STOPPED THEM, THOUGH, THEY LET SOME OF THE TECH SLIP OUT INTO THE WORLD.

I KNEW I'D EVENTUALLY NEED TO START TRACKING IT DOWN...TRY TO CLEAN UP THE MESS...BEFORE INNOCENT PEOPLE GET HURT.

TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT.

FLASH THOMPSON... KEEPING THE FREAKY @#$% OFF THE STREETS SO HONEST, HARD-WORKING AMERICANS CAN REST EASY.

HRR... HRRGH...

HRRR...

HRRUU

HRRR... MMMM

HRRRUUU

IT'S...NO GOOD...

CAN'T... CAN'T KEEP IT DOWN...

...AND I'M SO HUNGRY.

S-STARVING.

I'M SORRY... SORRY FOR THIS...

HMMMPH!

YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU?

YOU FORGIVE ME FOR WHAT I HAVE TO DO, DON'T YOU?

MMPH!

HEY! DOG-BREATH!

HRRRAAAA!

GIVE THE KID A LITTLE SPACE!

SMACK!

SO MUCH FOR KEEPING A LOW PROFILE.

NO TIME OR ENERGY FOR *DISGUISES* OR *OTHER* PARLOR TRICKS.

KEEP IT SIMPLE.

EVERYBODY, STAY CALM!

I'M GONNA GET YOU *OUT* OF HERE!

IT'S DARK HERE.

EVERYTHING MOVING FAST.

NNOO... NOO...

YOU'RE...NOT TAKING THEM *ANYWHERE.*

PLEASE...

WHAT THE...?

YOU... CAN'T...

I WON'T LET YOU.

THEY WON'T LET YOU!

LIKE I SAID...REALLY *STRANGE* STUFF.

PLEASE.

FORGIVE ME FOR THIS.

P-PLEASE...

"P-PLEASE..."

PLEASE... JUST LET ME GO...

PLEASE!

WHAT DO THESE THINGS DO ANYWAY?

NASTY LITTLE CRITTERS.

THINK THEY'LL KILL HIM?

WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT.

YEEEEAUUUUGGGGGG!

SHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE!

RRRGGH!

GET... OFF!

HUNGRY!

THEY NEED FLESH!

THEY MUST FEED!

I KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT LIVING WITH A HUNGRY...

...PARTNER.

HRRRK!

BELIEVE ME...YOU'VE GOTTA LEARN TO KEEP THEM IN CHECK.

OR THEY ONLY GET MORE DEMANDING.

RAAAGGGH!

YET AGAIN, THE SYMBIOTE SAVES MY LIFE.

I'M SUPPOSED TO BE IN CONTROL...BUT THAT WAS PURE *INSTINCT*.

AND I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S *MY* INSTINCT OR IF MAYBE THE SYMBIOTE IS WAKING UP.

BEEN AVOIDING THE *NEEDLE* TOO LONG.

ALL RIGHT. LET'S TRY THAT AGAIN.

THIS IS YOUR *LAST CHANCE* TO STAY--

--DOWN?

DAMN!

FOR A GUY WITH MALNUTRITION ISSUES, HE MOVES FAST.

STILL...I KEPT HIM FROM *EATING* ANYONE TONIGHT.

AND THEY'RE SO FREAKED OUT...SO TERRIFIED...THEY'RE NOT EVEN SURE WHAT THEY'VE SEEN.

SNNK!

SNNK!

THIS ONE'S GOING DOWN AS A *WIN*.

GO.

BUT WHATEVER THAT MONSTER WAS...

HE'S STILL OUT THERE.

I MIGHT'VE STOPPED HIM TONIGHT, BUT HE'S STILL *HUNTING*.

GOTTA FIND HIM...

THWIP

...BEFORE HE TRACKS DOWN ANOTHER *VICTIM.*

S-STARVING...

...GUTS TURNING INSIDE OUT...

...HAVE TO FIND SOMETHING TO--

HMM?

--EAT!

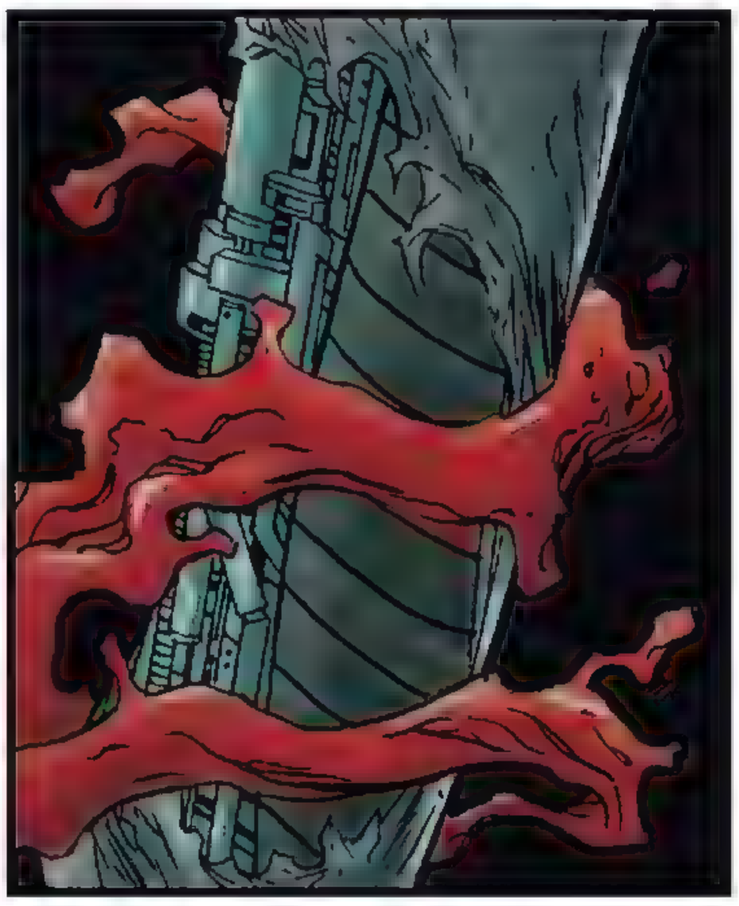
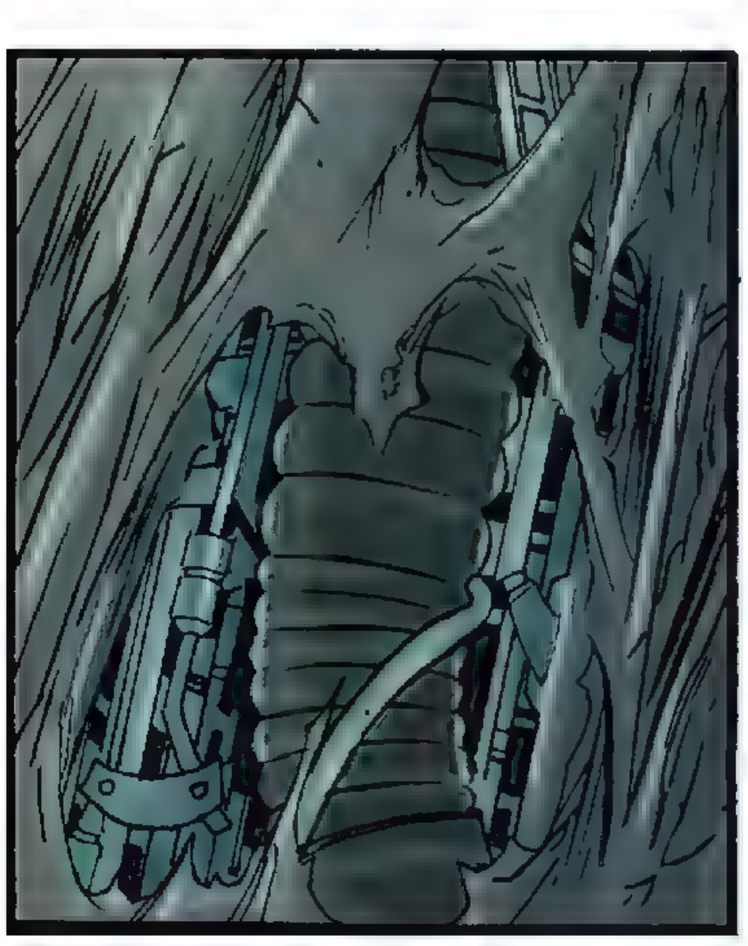
ME AND YOU, PAL...IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE BOTH MADE *MISTAKES.*

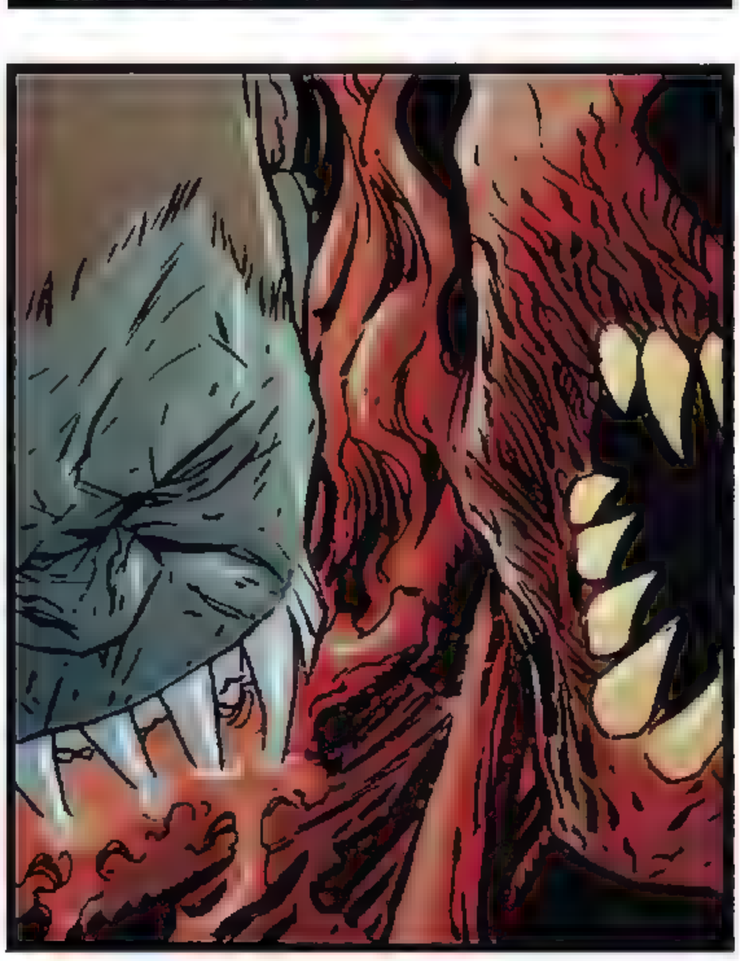
I WAS TRACKING A *FRIEND* OF MINE...AND YOU'VE GOT HIS *STINK* ALL OVER YOU.

AND YOU WERE LOOKING FOR--WHAT?--A QUICK AND EASY *SNACK?*

LOOKS LIKE WE BOTH PICKED THE WRONG GUY, HUH?

VENOM #33
"MONSTERS ANONYMOUS"



Philadelphia, PA.

RADIATION!

WHUUF!

SMASH!

SHRRR-WEEEEEEE

SHRRR-WEEEEEEE

DON'T *WANT* TO FIGHT...

...DON'T *WANT* TO KILL...

...BUT *THEY* WON'T LET ME STOP...

GOOD FOR THEM... WHOEVER THEY ARE!

BECAUSE ME AND TOXIN, WE DO WANT TO FIGHT!

BACK IN MY REPORTER DAYS, MY BOSS ALWAYS SAID..."IF YOU CAN'T KILL THE ONE YOU WANT, EDDIE...

"...KILL THE ONE YOU'RE WITH!"

SHWAKOW!

HRRAA--

C-CAN'T STOP US.

THE ADAPTATION MATRIX IS IN OUR BLOOD-STREAM.

GRR-KKGGK-SSHRP!

THE LETHALITY EQUATION... CHANGING US!

AAARGH!

SHRRRK!

GET OFF!

RRRRRRGGGHKK!

SLSSH-

SLSSSH-

SLSSSSH!

HOW'S THAT FEEL?

SLICED UP LIKE ROAST MEAT!

WAS GONNA LET YOU LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO TELL ME WHERE TO FIND AGENT VENOM...

...BUT I CAN TRACK VENOM ON MY OWN...

GGGGK-GRRRK!

...AND GET ONE MORE FREAK OFF THE STREETS!

GGKKG!

SHRP! SSHRP! SSHRP!

TWOFER!

HRRU?

HRRAGH!

SHUNK! CH-SHUNK! SHUNK!

RRRR... RRAA...

C'MON...

HEAL...

HEAL!

HRRR... HRRR...

YOU GOT MORE BITE THAN I THOUGHT YOU WOULD.

GOOD... GOOD...

GOOD REMINDER NEVER TO GET TOO--

YEAH. YOU BETTER RUN.

OF COURSE... SMELLING LIKE YOU DO... YOU'RE GONNA BE EASY TO FOLLOW.

AND SOMETHING TELLS ME MY DEAR OLD GRANDFATHER... VENOM... WILL BE COMING FOR YOU SOON ENOUGH.

BAIT THE HOOK...

"...SEE IF WE GET A NIBBLE."

NO OFFENSE, EUGENE...

...BUT YOU LOOK QUITE DREADFUL.

YEAH, DOCTOR McCOY. I KNOW.

BUT YOU SHOULD SEE THE *OTHER* GUY.

THE OTHER GUY?

JUST A FIGURE OF SPEECH, BEAST.

AH! OF COURSE!

FORGIVE ME. IT'S EARLY AND THIS IS ONLY MY THIRD CUP OF COFFEE.

THE JEAN GREY SCHOOL FOR HIGHER LEARNING

MAYBE WE'RE NOT *AVENGERS*...

...BUT WE'RE STILL BROTHERS IN CAFFEINATED ARMS.

ALWAYS AND FOREVER.

I SEE YOU'RE NOT USING THE PROSTHETIC LEGS.

I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THEY MIGHT MAKE THINGS A LITTLE EASIER FOR YOU.

MAYBE, BUT...

...ME AND THIS CHAIR, WE HAVE A *HISTORY.*

THE LEGS ARE FINE, I GUESS, BUT I KIND OF *HATE* THEM.

THEY'RE UNCOMFORTABLE. THEY PINCH AND...

...AND SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE "*MAKING THINGS EASIER*" IS SORT OF LIKE *CHEATING.*

I KNOW. *STUPID.*

NONSENSE.

YOU'RE MAKING A **FRESH START** FOR YOURSELF.

YOU WANT TO STAND ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET...

...SO TO SPEAK.

SO... ABOUT THIS... *CREATURE* I ENCOUNTERED.

THE *OTHER* GUY.

I BELIEVE HE'S BEEN...INFECTED... BY SOME SORT OF *ALIEN* TECHNOLOGY.

IT'S *CHANGING* HIM PRETTY DRAMATICALLY.

AND YOU BELIEVE THIS IS SOMETHING LEFT OVER FROM YOUR RECENT ENCOUNTER WITH THE **U-FOES.**

I'M GLANCING OVER THE **REPORT** YOU SENT ME NOW.

HONESTLY, EUGENE. YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN TAKING THINGS SLOW, DO YOU?

IT'S HARD TO SAY AT THIS POINT, BUT IT'S **POSSIBLE** I COULD HELP THIS MAN...ASSUMING HE WANTED HELP...

...AND ASSUMING YOU COULD BRING HIM TO ME.

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS YOU NEED ME TO *CAPTURE* THE FLESH-EATING MONSTER AND BRING HIM TO YOU FOR A *PLAYDATE.*

NO PROBLEM.

IF YOU NEED HELP, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO--

NO. WE'RE GOOD.

I'LL GET YOUR MAN.

CLICK!

"THERE'S JUST A COUPLE OF THINGS I NEED TO DO *FIRST*."

ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE.

BELIEVE ME, I REALIZE THESE EARLY MORNING MEETINGS CAN BE *GRUELING*.

THANKS TO EVERYONE FOR BEING HERE. I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME YOU TO OUR TUESDAY MORNING SESSION.

IF WE CAN TAKE OUR SEATS, WE CAN BEGIN.

I KNOW WE HAVE JOBS TO GET TO AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.

BUT IT'S NICE THAT WE CAN TAKE THE TIME TO BE HERE FOR OURSELVES AND FOR EACH OTHER.

I'LL GET US STARTED.

I AM *CHARLES*, AN *ALCOHOLIC*.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN GIVING A SPECIAL WELCOME TO OUR NEW ATTENDEES.

IF YOU'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOURSELF, I'M SURE WE'D ALL LOVE TO SAY HELLO AND GET TO KNOW YOU.

HI.

I'M EUGENE...BUT MY FRIENDS CALL ME *FLASH.*

AND I'M--

A SUPER HERO.

A WALKING TIME BOMB.

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

A MONSTER.

--AN ALCOHOLIC.

I DON'T BELONG HERE...NOT AMONG *NORMAL* PEOPLE.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE COME TO A MEETING LIKE THIS. I GUESS I'VE JUST HAD TOO MANY THINGS GOING ON.

BUT THAT'S MEANT I'VE BEEN TOO BUSY TO DRINK, TOO, SO I GUESS THAT'S GOOD.

NOT SURE THEY COULD POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON WITH ME.

THE NEEDLE... WHEN I USE IT... IS SUPPOSED TO KEEP MY *INNER DEMON* DOPED UP...

...BUT THESE PEOPLE... THE WAY THEY'RE LOOKING AT ME... ALL THEY SEE ARE *TRACK MARKS.*

DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T THINK ABOUT IT... EVERY TIME I PASS A LIQUOR STORE.

IT'S *ALWAYS* WITH ME, THOUGH, Y'KNOW?

WHISPERING TO ME.

AND I KNOW...DEEP DOWN...THAT ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LET MY GUARD DOWN JUST ONCE...

...AND THE *BEAST* TAKES OVER...

...VIOLENT... HUNGRY...

I JUST MOVED TO TOWN, THOUGH.

TRYING TO START OVER...AND IT'S *STRESSFUL...* Y'KNOW?

I'M JUST LOOKING FOR ALL THE HELP I CAN GET.

EVEN NOW... I CAN FEEL IT... *HISSING* AT ME.

SITTING HERE IN FRONT OF THIS CROWD...THIS *FACELESS* CROWD... I'M STILL ON MY OWN.

BUT THE SYMBIOTE... EVEN DRUGGED INTO SUBMISSION...REMINDS ME...I'M *NEVER ALONE.*

THANK YOU FOR SHARING, FLASH.

WE'RE ALL REALLY GLAD TO HAVE YOU WITH US.

FUNNY.

I GIVE THEM MY NAME.

NOW...DO WE HAVE ANY OTHER NEW GUESTS WITH US?

TELL THEM MY LIFE STORY.

JUST LIKE THAT, I'M PART OF THE UNIDENTIFIABLE MASSES.

MY NAME IS KIM.

AND I'M AN ALCOHOLIC.

IT'S NOT A BAD FEELING.

GIVES ME TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT'S AHEAD.

SPEND THE DAY TRYING TO FIT IN AT WORK.

SPEND THE NIGHT ON THE STREETS TRYING TO MAKE A *DIFFERENCE.*

Ruff Rick's Kennel

1001

MISS

UGH!

WHAT'S GOT THEM SO RILED UP?

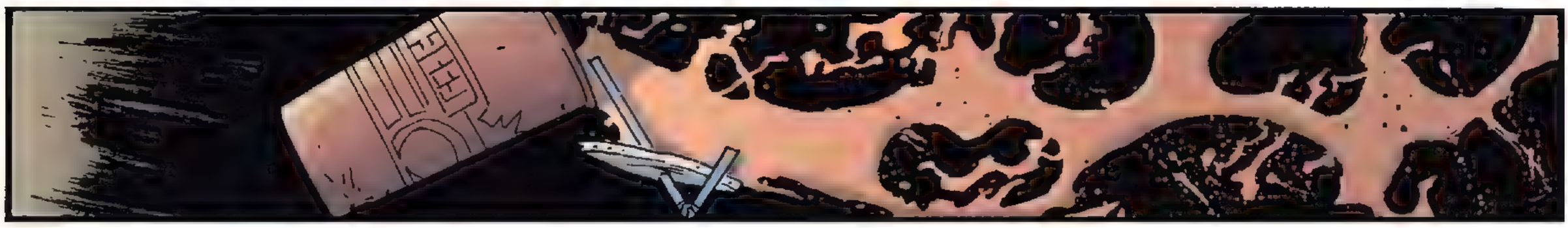
ROOF! WOOF! ROOF! WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!

HNH?

CRASH THRAK! CRASH!

ROOF! WOOF! WOOF! YIPE! YIPE! YIPE! YIPE!

WHAT'S GOING ON BACK--



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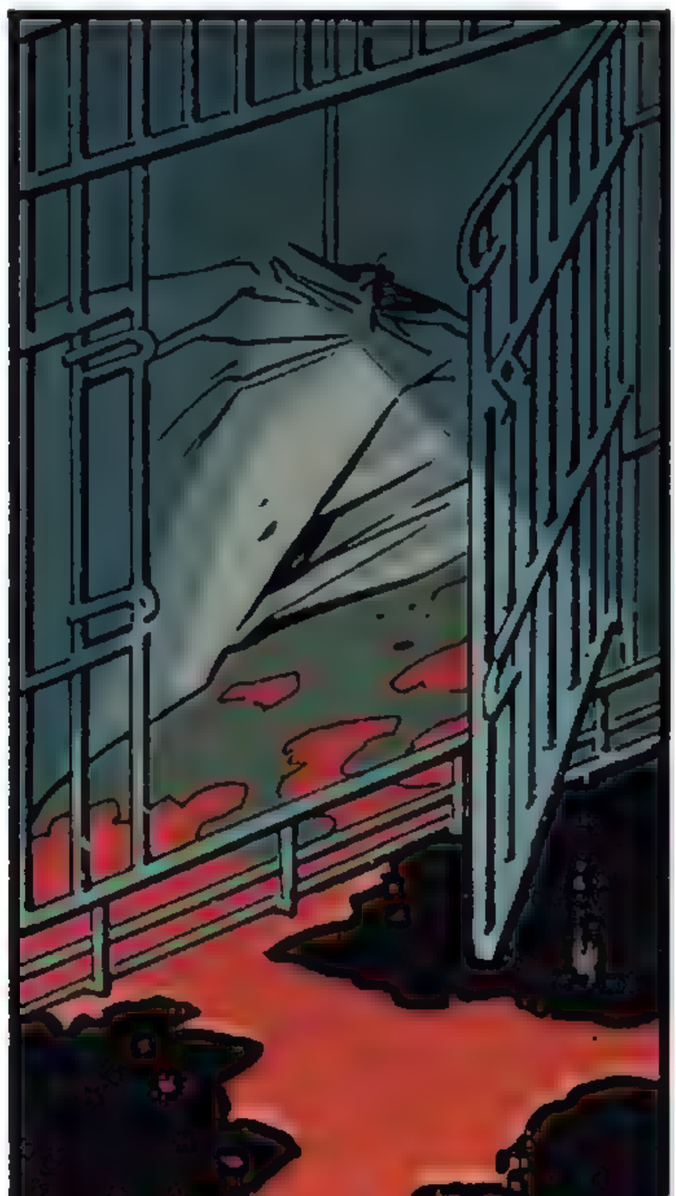
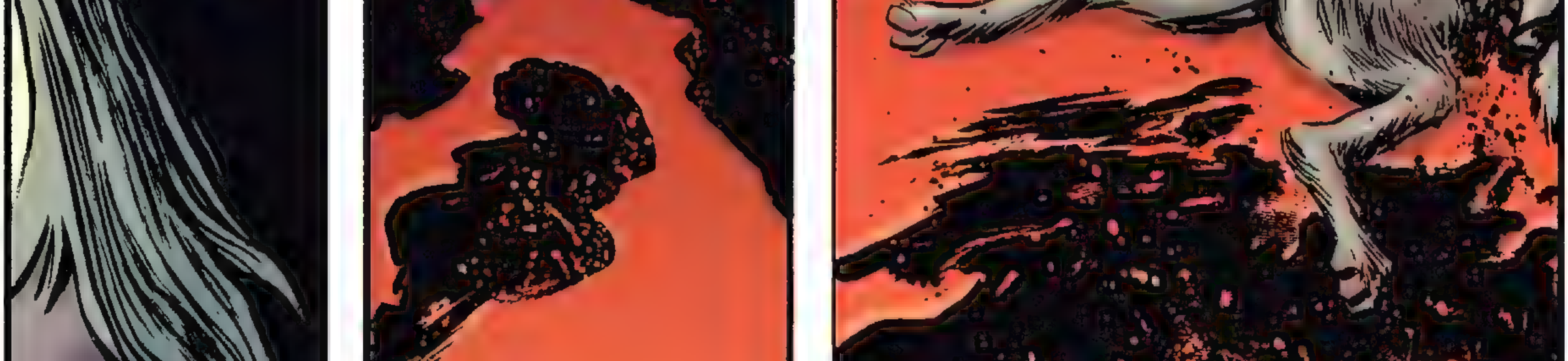




I'M SORRY.

SO SORRY.

CAN'T... CAN'T HELP MYSELF.

SO HUNGRY.

MUST FEED THEM.

MUST EAT.

YEEAAARGH!

KR-KRASH!

P-PLEASE!

PLEASE!

SOMEBODY!

SORRY, BUDDY!

THWIP!

HRR?

A BUTCHER SHOP, PET STORE, AND NOW THIS.

THIS GUY LEAVES ONE HELLUVA BLOODY TRAIL.

I'M NOT LETTING YOU MURDER ANY LITTLE OLD LADIES TONIGHT!

BUT I'VE GOT TO REMEMBER, HE'S A VICTIM.

BONDED TO... CREATURES... WHO ARE CHANGING HIM.

THUD

JOIN THE CLUB.

YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THIS!

JUST... STAY DOWN. PLEASE.

IT'S UP TO YOU...

I CAN HELP YOU.

BUT I WILL SHOOT IF YOU COME AT ME.

CAN'T.

NOTHING YOU CAN DO FOR ME. IT'S TOO LATE.

I MIGHT WANT YOUR HELP...

...BUT THEM--

--NEVER!

ALL RIGHT.

GO AHEAD. CALL MY BLUFF.

THWIPP!

I MAY NOT BLAST YOU...BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

HE'S HELPLESS... FOR THE MOMENT.

HOW LONG WILL THAT LAST?

AND IF BEAST CAN'T HELP HIM... CAN'T CURE HIM... WHAT THEN?

WOULD I WANT TO LIVE LIKE THAT?

I DON'T HAVE IT IN ME...BUT MAYBE THIS POOR BASTARD DESERVES--

A MERCY KILLING!

TOXIN!

THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE THINKING ABOUT WASN'T IT, GRANDDAD?

PUTTING THAT PATHETIC WRETCH OUT OF HIS MISERY?

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I THINK YOU SHOULD DO.

GUESS THE APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM THE TREE.

DON'T WORRY! I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM.

JUST AS SOON AS I'M DONE WITH YOU!

VENOM #34
"FAMILY BONDING"

IF I COULD GO BACK IN TIME...NOT FAR...MAYBE FIFTEEN OR SIXTEEN YEARS...

...I'D GIVE MY *YOUNGER SELF* A FEW WORDS OF *ADVICE*...

...JUST SOMETHING THAT MIGHT MAKE LIFE A LITTLE *EASIER*.

"THOMPSON, NO MATTER HOW BIG YOU ARE...NO MATTER HOW TOUGH OR MEAN...

"...THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEONE *BIGGER, MEANER*, AND *TOUGHER*...

SLIKKK!

AUUGHH!

"...JUST WAITING TO TAKE YOU DOWN."

Philadelphia, PA.

IN MY CASE, THE BIG, MEAN, AND TOUGH FREIGHT TRAIN THAT'S TRYING TO RUN ME DOWN IS *TOXIN*.

EDDIE BROCK...A PSYCHO WITH AN ALIEN SYMBIOTE...NOT TOO DIFFERENT FROM MY VENOM SYMBIOTE.

WHILE YOU'RE *GROVELING*, GRANDDAD...

...YOU MIGHT WANT TO GO AHEAD AND *PRAY*...

A LITTLE *DIVINE FAVOR* IS JUST WHAT YOU NEED TO GET THROUGH WHAT'S *NEXT!*

SHOOK!

RAAGH!

BROCK HATES VENOM...TOXIN HATES VENOM...

AND...RIGHT NOW...THE FEELING'S *MUTUAL*.

AW...AW, MAN.

BAD... THIS IS...SO BAD.

I'D BE *FIBBING* IF I SAID THIS WASN'T AT LEAST A *LITTLE* PERSONAL...

...IF I SAID I WASN'T *ENJOYING* THIS... *ESPECIALLY* AFTER WHAT YOU DID TO ME...

...TO US...

...BUT THIS IS FOR *YOUR OWN GOOD!*

SO HOLD STILL AND TAKE YOUR MEDICINE!

KRAK-KRAK!

UNNFF!

NEVER LIKE WHEN PEOPLE SAY THAT.

SYMBIOTE HEALS MY CUTS AND SCRAPES...

...ALIEN FLESH FLOWING INTO THE WOUNDS LIKE SUPER GLUE...

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE.

SPAK! CRRK! SHRAK!

SEE? THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM GRAMPS!

TOXIN'S STRONGER THAN ME. MUCH STRONGER.

YOU NEVER-- EVER--DO AS YOU'RE TOLD!

HE'S FUELED BY HIS ANGER...AND HE BELIEVES HE'S DOING THE *RIGHT* THING.

HATRED *AND* CONVICTION? THAT COMBO'S SENT NATIONS TO WAR.

BLAM! BLAM! B-BLAM!

BULLETS DON'T EVEN SLOW HIM DOWN.

RIPPLES ACROSS SYMBIOTE FLESH REMIND ME OF COINS THROWN IN A *WISHING WELL*.

AH-HA-HAH-HAH!

WHAT'S YOUR STORY, BROCK?

HRR

I THOUGHT THE SYMBIOTES WERE A BLIGHT... A CANCER.

BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU AND TOXIN ARE GETTING PRETTY CHUMMY.

PLAYING MIND GAMES?

TRYING TO GET INSIDE MY HEAD?

YAAAGH!

SLLSH! SSSLGK!

LET'S GET INSIDE YOUR HEAD!

CAN'T...SEE...

...BLOOD IN MY EYES...

...REGENERATING...

...NOT FAST ENOUGH...

SHRRRRRK!

ME AND TOXIN... WE'VE GOT AN UNDER-STANDING...

ONE DAY... WE'RE GONNA KILL EACH OTHER...OR TRY TO.

BUT FIRST THINGS FIRST...YOU'VE GOTTA DIE!

RRRAAAAAAGH!

WHAT THE HELL?!

ALL RIGHT... CHANGE OF PLANS.

CREEPY FIGURE FIRST, THEN YOU!!

SHOCK!

UNNNF!

YEEEAAAARRRRGGGK!

HRGGGKKSH!

GRRRAAAAAAGH!

K-TANK!

TANK!

NO!

STILL TRYING TO RESCUE THIS BROKEN WING?

STILL TRYING TO PLAY HERO?

I'D ADMIRE YOU FOR THAT...IF YOU WEREN'T SO DELUDED

YOU ARE NO--

SHROOK!

--HERO!

NNNYYA!

THRAKKOW!

SOONER OR LATER...

...YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO HELP YOURSELF

IT'LL TAKE YOU

THE MONSTER WILL SHOW ITSELF

CHOMP!

NOW. WHERE WERE WE?

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL HIM!

SPAWN

SKKKKRR--

YES. I DID

YOU WOULDA DONE THE SAME--SOONER OR LATER!

UURK!

YOU'RE A KILLER! FIGHT IT ALL YOU WANT!

THAT THING WANTS...

KRRRRRK!

RRREEAAAGHH!

FOR ALL THE TALK OF TEMPORARY ALLIANCES AGAINST ME...

HHHT!

NNNN... NOT BAD... FOR YESTERDAY'S MODEL.

CHHOMP!

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE THE *JUICE* TO PUT ME DOWN FOR GOOD.

TOXIN AND EDDIE...

...BONDED SO FAST...

...THEY'RE *ONE*...

...AND THEY DON'T EVEN REALIZE IT.

YOU MUST KNOW WHAT A DANGER YOU ARE!

YOU CAN'T RUN FROM IT! CAN'T HIDE!

EVERYONE AROUND YOU IS AT RISK!

YOU SHOULD THANK ME FOR THIS~

SHHK GNK!

DID HE JUST KILL ME?

SYMBIOTE HOLDS ME TOGETHER.

BARELY.

SCREAMING IN MY HEAD.

THIS IS NEW.

IT'S SCARED.

WELL HANG ON, I GOT THIS...

FHRRNNCH!

FNNK!

...SERUM...KEEPS MY SYMBIOTE UNDER CONTROL... SEDATED...

...BEEN SAVING IT UNTIL I REALLY NEEDED IT...

WON'T HOLD HIM OFF FOR LONG.

HRRAAG!

WHU--

WHAT DID YOU DO?

SLIPPED...

...SLIPPED ME A MICKEY.

HRRNNN

I...

...WHHUU...

I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU! I'M GONNA COME BACK FOR YOU, FLASH.

GONNA TEACH YOU A *LESSON.*

SHOW YOU HOW DANGEROUS A MONSTER CAN BE!

AND *NOT* JUST YOURS!

THUMP-
KP-KPUMP!

H-HELLO?
SOMEBODY THERE?

WHA--
COACH THOMPSON?

UGH...

WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOU?

DID SOMEBODY DO THIS TO YOU?

YOU... SHOULD...SEE... THE OTHER GUY.

ANDI...

I...I'LL BE ALL... RIGHT...

WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU TO YOUR APARTMENT.

WHERE'S YOUR *WHEELCHAIR?*

HOW'D YOU--

ANDI... N-NO...

I'LL BE *FINE*... JUST *GO*... JUST...

WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT? YOU LOOK LIKE--

LEAVE ME ALONE!

SORRY FOR TRYING TO HELP.
HOPE YOU DON'T ROT UP HERE...

...ASS!
A-AND I...

UGH...POOR KID... BUT...TOXIN'S RIGHT. I CAN'T LET ANYONE GET CLOSE. ANYONE.
THAT'S WHY I LEFT BETTY. LEFT NEW YORK.

I'LL HEAL... BUT TOXIN'S NOT FINISHED WITH ME.
AHHG...
HE'LL COME LOOKING FOR ME...AND GOD HELP ANYONE WHO GETS TOO CLOSE.

GOTTA WONDER... IN 15 YEARS OR SO...IF I COULD GO BACK IN TIME...
...WILL THIS BE THE NIGHT I WARN MYSELF ABOUT...

...THE NIGHT I MARKED EVERYONE AROUND ME FOR *DEATH*...?

...

PRIMARY COMMAND ROUTINE.

GAIN STRENGTH = FUEL = FEED.

INTERRUPTED.

HEY... WHICH OF YOU *THIEVES* TOOK THE LAST OF THE *BOLOGNA*?

HEY! WAKE UP! I'M *TALKING* TO YOU!

SECONDARY COMMAND ROUTINE.

HEY! I CAN *SMELL* THE BOLOGNA ON YOU!

PROLIFERATE = MULTIPLY = SPAWN.

INITIATED.

YAAAA--

OH-
NO-NO-
OH-NO

NOOOOO!

SKREEEEEEEEEE

GGGGKK

RRRRGGL-
GKK

ALIEN SPECIES = SYMBIOTIC ENTITIES = DESIGNATE: TOXIN = DESIGNATE: VENOM.

SKITTER-SKK-SKIT-SKIT-SKK

IDENTIFIED.

PRIMARY THREAT = APEX PREDATOR.

TERTIARY COMMAND ROUTINE.

AAAUUUGH!

ELIMINATE = DESTROY - MURDER = SLAY.

TARGET = TOXIN.

TARGET...

...venom.

VENOM #35
"NIGHT OF THE SYMBIOTE SLAYERS!"

WHEN THE NEW TEACHER ON THE BLOCK COMES TO SCHOOL WITH A NASTY SHINER, THE RUMORS START FLYING.

MUGGING?

LOVER'S QUARREL?

FALL FROM THE WHEELCHAIR?

JEALOUS HUSBAND?

DRUGS?

GAMBLING DEBT?

FIGHT CLUB?

BOTTOM LINE... EVERYONE WANTS TO KNOW...

...WHO DID OL' *FLASH* THOMPSON PISS OFF?

SLAM!

THAT'S A *LONG* LIST.

BUT IN THIS CASE I GOT MY *ASS* HANDED TO ME BY A *10-FOOT-TALL* PSYCHOPATH CALLED *TOXIN*.

ALSO KNOWN AS--

EDDIE BROCK.

THAT'S EDDIE BROCK!

HERE! AT SCHOOL!

AT MY JOB.

SURROUNDED BY INNOCENT KIDS.

MOUTH GOES DRY. GUTS GO WATERY.

HE SAID HE WOULD TEACH ME A LESSON.

BUT NOT NOW! NOT AMONG ALL THESE KIDS!

THE DAMAGE WE COULD DO IF VENOM AND TOXIN CUT LOOSE...

BROCK'S GOT AN INSANE MAD-ON FOR ME, BUT HE ALWAYS TRIED TO PROTECT INNOCENT PEOPLE.

HE WOULDN'T...

WOULD HE?

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?

HOW DID YOU FIND ME?

WASN'T THAT HARD, "AGENT."

AFTER WHAT CRIME-MASTER DID TO ME...

...AFTER WHAT YOU LET HIM DO...

...I KNEW THE REAL YOU.

TRACKING YOU DOWN WAS A SNAP. I WAS A REPORTER, REMEMBER?

THIS *ISN'T* HAPPENING, BROCK.

NOT *NOW*. NOT *HERE*.

OH, IT'S *HAPPENING*.

WE'RE GONNA *FINISH* WHAT WE STARTED LAST *NIGHT*.

YOU AND ME ARE GONNA *WALK* RIGHT OUT OF *HERE*...RIGHT THIS VERY *INSTANT*...FIND SOMEPLACE NICE AND *ISOLATED*.

NO INTERRUPTIONS OR DISTRACTIONS.

AND IF I TELL YOU TO GO #$%@ YOURSELF?

WELL, THEN.

I GUESS YOU WOULDN'T LEAVE ME A CHOICE BUT TO LET *TOXIN* OFF THE LEASH RIGHT NOW.

YOU WON'T.

I KNOW YOU'RE A *NUT-JOB*, BROCK.

BUT *HERE*...

SMACK!

TAKE A LOOK AROUND.

I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU HURT THESE KIDS!

FUNNY.

I WAS GONNA SAY THE SAME THING TO YOU.

YOU MUST BE A DAMNED IDIOT...BRINGING THAT SYMBIOTE TO A SCHOOL.

THOSE CREATURES... THEY'RE PREDATORS...

AND YOU BROUGHT ONE RIGHT INTO THE MIDDLE OF A HERD OF LAMBS.

"HERO."

Y'KNOW, EDDIE. I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR HOLIER-THAN-THOU SPIEL.

ENOUGH!

YOU MIGHT WHINE ABOUT BEING BONDED TO TOXIN.

BUT WE BOTH KNOW THE TRUTH.

YOU WANTED IT.

YOU TRYING TO GET ME GOING?

BECAUSE I'LL DO THIS-- RIGHT HERE-- IF YOU W--

SNF! SNF!

CAN'T YOUR SUIT SMELL IT?

WHAT?!

OIL AND BLOOD. CHEMICALS. ROT.

DAMMIT!

STINKS LIKE THAT ALIEN FREAK YOU AND I TANGLED WITH.

"LOOKS LIKE YOU AND ME AIN'T THE ONLY *MONSTERS* WHO DECIDED TO GET AN EDUCATION TODAY."

PRIMARY ROUTINE = ACTIVE.

ELIMINATE = DESTROY = SLAY.

TARGET = APEX PREDATOR = TOXIN = VENOM.

YEEEAAARRGH!

OH GOD OH GOD!

SECONDARY ROUTINE = ACTIVE.

C'MON, MOVE!

FEED.

WOOOO-WOOOOO-WHOOO

ALARM = WARNING = ALERT.

ACTIVATED.

OUTCOME = DESIRABLE.

WOOOO-WOOOOO-WHOOO

ALARM = WARNING = ALERT + AGITATION = ANGUISH = SCREAM = ATTRACTOR.

ATTRACTOR = BAIT.

TARGET = APEX PREDATORS.

YAAAAGH!

GGGGKK!

WOOOO-WOOOOO-WHOOO

"THE FIRE ALARM'S BEEN TRIGGERED!"

WOOOO-WOOOOO-WHOOO

WOOOO-WOOOO-WHOOO

THIS AIN'T GOT *NOTHING* TO DO WITH A *FIRE.*

PLEASE... UH... EVERYONE...

...MOVE IN AN *ORDERLY* FASHION...

HOW DO YOU WANT TO DO THIS, EDDIE?

YOU SAY YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE THESE KIDS GET HURT.

WELL, WHATEVER TROUBLE JUST WALKED THROUGH THE FRONT DOORS...

...I'VE GOT THE FEELING *WE* BROUGHT IT HERE.

I'M GONNA MAKE SURE THESE STUDENTS ARE SAFE.

YOU WANNA KILL ME ONCE I'M DONE, FEEL *FREE.*

BUT FOR RIGHT NOW, GET THE #$%@ OUT OF MY WAY!

EVERYONE! IN HERE!

GET INSIDE AND LOCK THE DOOR!

WOOOO-WOOOO-WHOOO

BUT...THE *ALARM.*

JUST DO WHAT I SAY, ANDI.

GET INSIDE. TRY TO KEEP EVERYONE ELSE *CALM.*

BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU?

WOOOO-WOOOO-WHOOO

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.

JUST KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN UNTIL I GIVE THE ALL CLEAR.

I'M NOT GOING TO LET *ANYTHING* HAPPEN TO YOU.

I PROMISE YOU, *ANDI*.

TOLD ANDI WHATEVER IT TOOK TO KEEP HER *CALM*.

NOW I JUST HAVE TO MAKE DAMN SURE I STICK TO MY *WORD*.

IT'S *AGREED*, THEN?

YEAH.

WE *KILL* EACH OTHER *LATER*.

SHOW THESE DUMBASSES--

--WHOEVER THEY ARE--

--THAT THEY PICKED THE *WRONG DAY* TO START TROUBLE AT *WEST PHILLY!*

TARGET = TOXIN = VENOM = UNDETECTED--

HEAD'S UP!

SKKREEEEEEEEE

HRRR... CRUNCHY!

DON'T WORRY, FELLAS. I'M NOT LEAVING YOU OUT.

YOU'RE NEXT!

SSHHK-KK-GG-SHK!

TARGET = TOXIN = OVERCONFIDENT = CARELESS = OUTNUMBERED.

THEY'RE RIGHT. THEY'VE GOT US AT A *NUMBERS* DISADVANTAGE.

TOXIN GOES IN FOR A FULL FRONTAL ASSAULT--*SHOCK AND AWE.*

I GO FOR *GUERILLA* TACTICS.

SH-KANK! KLANK!

SQUEEEEEEE--

NEED TO EVEN THINGS UP A BIT.

SHAK!

THESE GUYS LOOK LIKE THEY'RE... *INFECTED*...BY THE SAME VIRAL-TECH AS THE MAN I'D BEEN TRACKING THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS.

THE MAN TOXIN *ATE ALIVE* RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.

RRAGGGH!

HE SAID THERE WASN'T A CHOICE...THAT THERE WASN'T MUCH LEFT OF A *HUMAN BEING* IN THE THING HE KILLED.

SEEING THESE CREATURES...THE WAY THEY SEEM TO HAVE *SPREAD* FROM ONE PERSON TO THE NEXT...MUTATING THEM.

I CAN'T HELP BUT BELIEVE TOXIN WAS *RIGHT.*

MAYBE HE'S RIGHT ABOUT *ME*, TOO.

ABOUT *BOTH* OF US.

AND IF *THAT'S* THE CASE...MAYBE I SHOULD TAKE A STEP BACK.

CHOMP!

BROCK BROUGHT TOXIN HERE... TO THE SCHOOL...WITH EVERY INTENTION OF KILLING ME.

YYEEAAAGKK!

SHRGGGK!

THESE CYBORG MONSTERS CAME FOR THE SAME REASON.

RRUHH!

G-GLUK!

SLASH!

I COULD LET *NATURAL SELECTION* RUN ITS COURSE.

SLGGHK!

LET THEM SLAUGHTER EACH OTHER.

SCHKRRK!

I COULD JUST COME IN AND TAKE CARE OF THE *CLEANUP*.

SLASH!

...GONNA...

...KILL EVERY...

...LAST...

...ONE...

...OF YOU...

REEE AGH!

NAH.

QUERY = APEX PREDATOR = TARGET.

???

OR-ORUMBL KRAK-ORUNK-

ORU-KRAK!

GET OFF HIM!

"WELL, ALEX... I'LL TAKE 'THINGS I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE DOING IN A MILLION YEARS' FOR $1,000,

"WHAT IS, 'SAVE TOXIN'S ASS SO HE CAN LIVE TO KILL ME ANOTHER DAY?'"

SKR-KOM!

THIS IS PROBABLY ONE OF THOSE MOMENTS THAT WILL COME BACK TO HAUNT ME WHEN I LEAST EXPECT IT.

RRRRROOOOAAARRRR

EDDIE *KNOWS* WHO I AM.

HE CAN STRIKE AT ME...OR MY FAMILY... OR MY FRIENDS... ANY TIME HE WANTS.

NOT LONG AGO, I WENT AFTER CRIME-MASTER... WITH EVERY INTENTION OF *ASSASSINATING* HIM... FOR THE SAME REASON.

BUT I'M NOT WILLING TO DO THAT NOW.

AND MAYBE THAT'S THE *BIGGEST MISTAKE* OF MY LIFE.

CRRRRRACK!

SKKKRRRRRRREECCCCHH

LIKE I SAID BEFORE, I DON'T THINK I'M *SUPPOSED* TO HAVE AN *EASY* LIFE.

THAT'S IT! THIS LITTLE FAMILY FEUD IS OVER!

SQQWWAAARRRK!

KRAKOW!

GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU, *GRANDPA*

YOU DIDN'T DO TOO BAD FOR AN OLD GUY

SAVED YOUR HIDE, DIDN'T I?

YOU *READY* FOR WHAT'S NEXT?

YOU STILL WANT TO DO THIS?

AFTER EVERYTHING THAT JUST HAPPENED?

THAT'S RIGHT.

AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED... AND WHAT HASN'T HAPPENED YET.

I LOOK AT YOU... AND IT'S LIKE LOOKING INTO A MIRROR.

I KNOW THE URGES THAT COME WITH VENOM.

I CONTROL IT...

...BECAUSE I HAVE TO.

I COULDN'T CONTROL IT

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU CAN?

THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND ME, EDDIE.

YOU TURNED YOUR BACK ON EVERYBODY... EVERYTHING.

THERE WAS NO REASON FOR YOU TO KEEP THE BEAST AT BAY.

BUT ME... I'M TRYING TO BUILD A LIFE.

...OKAY.

HUH?

IT'S A DEAL. YOU LIVE A LIFE... AND I'M GONNA BE WATCHING YOU.

SOONER OR LATER, YOU'RE GONNA LOSE CONTROL.

AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS... I'LL SWOOP IN... KILL YOU QUICK.

IF THAT EVER HAPPENS...

...I'LL WANT YOU TO KILL ME.

NOT IF...

...WHEN.

YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED HOW BAD THINGS CAN GET, FLASH.

LIKE I ASKED YOU BEFORE...

ARE YOU READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT?

HAVEN'T HEARD FINAL REPORTS YET, BUT CASUALTIES WERE *LOW*. A LOT LOWER THAN THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

NO FATALITIES AMONG STUDENTS.

A FEW PEOPLE RUSHED TO THE HOSPITAL. A COUPLE OF COPS--GOOD MEN--WHO *WON'T* BE GOING HOME TO THEIR FAMILIES.

Philadelphia

17 : 43

SEEMS LIKE NEWS CREWS GOT HERE BEFORE THE AUTHORITIES.

I'M REPORTING FROM WEST PHILADELPHIA HIGH SCHOOL...WHERE A DRAMATIC SERIES OF EVENTS UNFOLDED EARLIER THIS MORNING.

Philadelphia

A CREATURE... BELIEVED BY SOME EXPERTS TO BE THE SYMBIOTIC ENTITY KNOWN AS VENOM OR POSSIBLY CARNAGE...WAS INVOLVED IN SOME CAPACITY IN AN ATTACK ON THE SCHOOL.

AT THIS TIME, WE'RE AWAITING CONFIRMATION--

HEY! THERE'S ONE OF THE FACULTY!

COME WITH ME, JOHNNY!

WANT TO GET THIS ON CAMERA!

EXCUSE ME, SIR.

YOU WERE *INSIDE* THE SCHOOL DURING THE ATTACK, YES?

UH...

CAN YOU TELL US WHAT HAPPENED?

WE'RE HEARING REPORTS OF AN *ALIEN CREATURE* FIGHTING TO PROTECT THE SCHOOL.

I'M NOT SURE I HAVE MUCH TO SAY.

I ONLY SAW A LITTLE BIT BEFORE I LOCKED MYSELF IN THE SUPPLY CLOSET.

BUT... YEAH...I GUESS I SAW THE...UH... *CREATURE.*

JUST *BRIEFLY,* MIND YOU.

IT WAS RED... AND BLACK...AND COVERED IN...I DUNNO... *PASTA* OR SOMETHING.

"WHATEVER IT WAS... IT *SINGLEHANDEDLY* FOUGHT OFF THOSE KILLER CYBORGS OR WHATEVER THEY WERE.

"AND THEN IT JUST TOOK OFF, I GUESS.

"IT WAS PRETTY *FRIGHTENING...* BUT KIND OF *NICE,* TOO.

"IT'S A GOOD FEELING, KNOWING SOMEONE'S OUT THERE LOOKING OUT FOR YOU...

"...WATCHING OUT FOR WHATEVER COMES *NEXT.*"

CLK-SKITTER-CLK!

VENOM #36
"SIMPLE."

Monday.

A PERSON CAN GO AN ENTIRE LIFETIME WITHOUT ACCURATELY IDENTIFYING THEIR *SHTICK*.

THAT ONE THING THAT MAKES THEM TRULY *SPECIAL*.

Tuesday.

AND I HAVEN'T ALWAYS KNOWN WHAT SET ME APART FROM THE COMPETITION.

AA

WHAT MAKES *ME* SPECIAL?

Wednesday.

AM I A FORMER HIGH SCHOOL ALL-STAR? AN INJURED VET? A *HERO?*

A *MONSTER?*

IS IT THE ALIEN SYMBIOTE THAT'S BONDED TO ME LIKE A SOUPED-UP *PARASITE?*

Thursday.

IT TOOK A LOT OF TIME, AND MORE THAN A FEW HEADACHES...

...BUT I FINALLY FIGURED OUT THE GIMMICK THAT'S *DEFINED* WHO I AM FOR SO LONG.

Friday.

DRINKS

I'M STARTING A NEW LIFE...AND EVERY SECOND OF EVERY DAY...

...I'M TERRIFIED OF *OVERCOMPLICATING* THE @#$% OUT OF IT!

Saturday.

THAT SEEMS TO BE MY *GIFT*.

OF COURSE, NOW THAT I *RECOGNIZE* THAT TRAIT...

...IT'S TIME FOR A LITTLE *COURSE CORRECTION*.

Sunday.

KEEP IT *SIMPLE.*

THAT'S MY NEW MOTTO.

THE STRAIGHTFORWARD APPROACH WORKS BEST.

MY NAME IS EUGENE "FLASH" THOMPSON.

OTHERWISE KNOWN AS *VENOM.*

I'LL ADMIT... IT'S BEEN A *LONG TIME* SINCE I ATTENDED CHURCH SERVICES.

BUT I DON'T REMEMBER QUITE SO MUCH *CRANK* BEING PASSED AROUND DURING COMMUNION.

I MAY NOT BE THE BEST SUPER HERO IN THE BIZ, BUT I'M WHAT PHILADELPHIA'S GOT.

YOU'RE GONNA SHOOT AT ME? IN *HERE?*

YOU'RE *KIDDING,* RIGHT?

BECAUSE IF YOU'RE NOT--

YAA!

--YOU MAY TAKE THE PRIZE FOR THE *STUPIDEST* METH COOKS EVER!

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY DANGEROUS CHEMICALS YOU'VE SQUIRRELED AWAY HERE?

DOES THE WORD "*COMBUSTIBLE*" MEAN NOTHING TO YOU?

UNFF!

THR-THRAK!

THIS TELLS ME SOMETHING-- SOMETHING *IMPORTANT.*

PLEASE... DON'T... PLEASE...

I WASN'T GONNA SHOOT...I SWEAR....

YOU FELLAS AREN'T SMART ENOUGH TO MANAGE AN OPERATION LIKE THIS ON *YOUR OWN.*

SO WHY DON'T YOU DO YOUR VERY BEST TO *INGRATIATE* YOURSELF TO ME RIGHT HERE AND NOW--

--AND TELL ME ALL ABOUT *WHOEVER* IT IS WHO'S CALLING YOUR SHOTS.

Monday.

SEE...I'VE LEARNED THAT THE WORLD IS AS *COMPLEX* AND *CONVOLUTED* AS YOU LET IT BE.

I'VE BROUGHT A LOT OF GRIEF INTO MY LIFE. I'VE *COMPLICATED* THINGS WITH BAD DECISIONS... WITH BOOZE...WITH ONE SCREWUP AFTER ANOTHER.

THESE DAYS, THOUGH, MY JOB'S PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD.

WHEN BAD PEOPLE CRAWL OUT OF THEIR HOLES, I THUMP THEM BACK DOWN.

ROUGH 'EM UP, GIVE 'EM A LITTLE SCARE, ALERT THE PROPER AUTHORITIES, VANISH INTO THE SHADOWS...

AND MAKE IT TO WORK BRIGHT-EYED AND BUSHY-TAILED THE NEXT MORNING.

NOTHING TO IT.

PUT THE PHONE AWAY, ANDI.

IF YOU'RE NOT GONNA PARTICIPATE WITH THE OTHERS, YOU CAN AT LEAST PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU'RE MISSING.

WHATEVER.

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE I'M *MISSING* MUCH.

YOU KNOW, YOU ONLY GET SO MANY *FREE PASSES* IN THIS CLASS.

YOU'RE A SMART GIRL.

I'D HATE TO THINK YOU MIGHT FAIL P.E. BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO CHANGE CLOTHES.

MAYBE I JUST DON'T SEE THE *SCHOLASTIC VALUE* OF DODGEBALL.

WOMP!

AND STAY DOWN, GIMP!

RHEEE!

HEY!

WATCH THE *UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS*, DARIUS!

SORRY, COACH!

THOUGHT I'D JUST GIVE THESE DEAD-WEIGHTS SOME *INCENTIVE* TO AVOID THE BALL.

YEAH...

THIS IS *WAY* EDUCATIONAL.

TAKE DARIUS FOWLER, FOR EXAMPLE. WHY DOES HE GET UNDER MY SKIN SO BADLY?

SIMPLE. I USED TO *BE* HIM.

WHAT WOULD I DO IF I COULD GO BACK IN TIME AND CONFRONT MY YOUNGER SELF?

I'D SHAKE HIM TILL HIS BRAINS OOZED OUT HIS EARS.

OOF!

YEAH! GIMP NUMBER TWO DOWN!

WHAT'S WRONG, KYLE? DID I BRUISE THAT BIG, FRAGILE BRAIN OF YOURS?

YOU'RE NOT GONNA CRY, ARE YOU?

SEE? BEING THE SMARTEST KID IN SCHOOL DON'T MATTER--

--IF YOU DON'T LEARN HOW TO DUCK.

I MEAN...I'M A *TEACHER*.

AND SOMEBODY HAS TO TEACH THAT KID A LESSON, RIGHT?

I NEVER SAID KEEPING THINGS SIMPLE WAS GONNA BE *EASY* FOR ME.

RHHUFFF!

THWOMP!

W-WHO...

WHO THREW THAT?!

HaHaHaHaHaHa

THAT...WAS *UNINTENTIONAL.*

STILL...NO REAL HARM DONE.

PLAY IT COOL. THERE WON'T BE A PROBLEM AS LONG AS NOBODY WAS--

DAMMIT.

I SHOULD'VE JUST LET HER PLAY WITH HER PHONE.

THERE I GO, *OVERCOMPLICATING* THE SITUATION AGAIN.

CHANCES ARE...IT ALL HAPPENED SO FAST... AND I DIDN'T SEE A THING.

BLAM! BLAM! B-BLAM!

AND IT'S NOT LIKE SHE SAID ANYTHING TO ME. SHE BOLTED OUT OF THE GYM AS SOON AS THE BELL SOUNDED.

MY SECRET'S SAFE...AND I NEED TO FOCUS ON THE TASK AT HAND.

SCREEECH

VINAGRE 7582 TODOS

ANOTHER SHIPMENT OF DRUGS OR WEAPONS OR... WHATEVER... FINDING ITS WAY TO ANOTHER WOULD-BE CRIME WARLORD WITH A COLORFUL NAME.

SHAKE DOWN ENOUGH LOW-LIFES AND YOU HEAR THE NAME MORE THAN ONCE.

LORD OGRE... HERE I--

WOOOOAH-- UNNF!

SCREEECCH!

THWUMP!

WHAT IF ANDI *DID* CATCH A GLIMPSE OF MY ALTER-EGO?

WHAT IF SHE'S POSTING GOTHIC POETRY ABOUT HER SHAPE-CHANGING GYM TEACHER ON TUMBLR OR SOME OTHER ANGSTY CORNER OF THE INTERNET?

SO WHAT IF SHE DID SEE WHAT HAPPENED?

FOCUS, THOMPSON!

HEAD IN THE GAME!

YOU CAN DEAL WITH THAT LATER... *AFTER* YOU CATCH THE BAD GUYS.

IF THEY HAVEN'T GOTTEN AWAY ALREADY.

THEY'RE NOT LETTING UP ON THE GAS. I NEED--

HEH.

WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?

RAN INTO SOME FREAK...A *VIGILANTE* OR SOMETHING.

HAD TO *SHAKE* HIM.

THOUGHT IT BEST TO--

WADADA-RRRRRRRR

ENTER, THE VENOM-MOBILE!

CRASH and SMASH

AGENT VENOM

VROOOO

BEEN CHASING THESE LEADS NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.

FWWASH!

THRASH!

AND IT ALL BROUGHT ME HERE.

BLAM!

B-BLAM!

BLAM!

AGGH!

THWIP!

THE TRAIL...AND THE COURSE OF ACTION...COULDN'T BE MORE CLEAR.

SHUT THEM DOWN--*HARD*.

YAAAH!

CLEAN UP THE STREETS.

THAT'S WHAT HEROES DO.

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

JUST NEED TO PUT THE FEAR OF GOD INTO ONE OF THESE PUNKS.

GET MYSELF ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE *BIG BOSS*.

PTU!

YOU'LL DO!

TELL ME WHERE HE IS!

WHERE'S YOUR BOSS?

I... I...

I'M RIGHT HERE, BOGEYMAN.

YOU COME LOOKING FOR *LORD OGRE*... AND YOU'LL *FIND* HIM.

BUT THIS IS A CAREFUL-WHAT-YOU-WISH-FOR SCENARIO, SEE?

BECAUSE, I'M ASSUMING IT'S *YOU* WHO HAS BEEN GIVING MY EMPLOYEES A *BEAT-DOWN* FROM ONE SIDE OF PHILLY TO THE OTHER.

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT MAKING AN *ASSUMPTION*.

SO I'M WRONG?

NO, YOU'RE *RIGHT*.

I'VE BEEN PEEING IN YOUR CORN FLAKES.

BUT YOU'RE STILL AN *ASS*.

I'M A *BUSINESSMAN.*

IF YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, YOU COULD'VE *CALLED* AND ARRANGED A *MEETING.*

FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, I PRETTY MUCH JUST PUT YOU *OUT* OF BUSINESS.

BUT IF YOU WANT ME TO PUT MORE OF A FINE POINT ON THE SITUATION, I CAN HANDLE THAT.

YOU THINK YOU *SCARE* ME WITH YOUR TOUGH TALK?

I AIN'T NEVER BEEN AFRAID OF *NOTHING.*

I LOOK INTO THE MIRROR EVERY MORNING, AND I SEE MY OWN *CRUELTY*...MY OWN *HEARTLESSNESS*... STARING BACK AT ME.

TELL ME.

IF I CAN FACE *THAT* DOWN EVERY DAY, WHAT DO I HAVE TO FEAR FROM A *BOGEYMAN* LIKE YOU?

I GUESS WE'LL FIND OUT, HUH?

M-MY LORD... I WOULDN'T HAVE SAID NOTHING...

...I WOULDN'T HAVE FLIPPED ON YOU... NOT EVER...

Y-YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

OF COURSE.

YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A GOOD *APOSTLE.*

IT'S A *TRAGEDY* LOSING YOU LIKE THIS.

BARK BARK BARK

LORD OGRE'S AS BIG AND MEAN AS HIS NAME IMPLIES.

GRRAAWF!

YEEEEEAAAARGGH!

I'VE GONE UP AGAINST BIGGER... MEANER.

FOR ALL HIS TALK ABOUT BEING UNAFRAID, I DON'T SEE HIM STEPPING UP TO FIGHT ME.

YIIIPE!

SHOW A LITTLE FORCE, HE'LL SOBER RIGHT UP.

REE-YIIPE!

WE'LL SEE HOW LORD OGRE AND HIS BAND OF FREAKS LIKE IT WHEN--

LIKE I SAID. NOT AS TOUGH AS HE LOOKS.

HE TOOK OFF AS SOON AS I WAS DISTRACTED.

COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR, THOUGH.

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO--

TH-THUMP!

PLEASE DON'T TELL ME THAT ONE OF THEM TRIED TO HIDE IN THE VAN.

SO DESPERATE TO PROTECT THEIR SUPPLY CHAIN, THEY DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER RUNNING.

WHOEVER THAT IS, THEY DESERVE TO BE THE FIRST ONE CAUGHT.

HIDE-AND-SEEK'S OVER--

SRRRNNNK

THOUGHT I WAS DEALING WITH A SIMPLE DRUG DEALER AND GUN RUNNER.

BUT THIS GUY... LORD OGRE...IS A *MONSTER*.

AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DEAL WITH MONSTERS.

JUST LIKE THAT...

...NOTHING'S SIMPLE ANYMORE.

VENOM #37
"KINDRED SPIRITS PART 1"

West Philadelphia High School.

SO... VENOM.

UH... HOW DID-- WHAT-

WELL...

THAT'LL WAKE YOU UP FASTER THAN A STRONG CUP OF COFFEE.

YOU'RE *FLASH THOMPSON*, RIGHT? THE ASSISTANT COACH?

I UNDERSTAND YOU WERE PRESENT DURING THE RECENT... *UNPLEASANTNESS* AT THE SCHOOL.

YOU SAW *VENOM*...UP CLOSE AND *PERSONAL*.

KATY KIERNAN... HERE...ASKING ABOUT MY ALTER EGO.

PLAY IT COOL.

BETTER YET...PLAY IT *STUPID*.

I'M SORRY. WHO ARE YOU AGAIN?

KATY KIERNAN. THE DAILY INQUISITOR.

YOU *WERE* HERE WHEN VENOM SAVED THE SCHOOL, RIGHT?

THAT... THAT'S NOT--

NOT WHO?

NOT VENOM?

HER INSTINCTS ARE *SHARP*.

SHE CAN TELL I'M FULL OF IT.

IT'S *NOT* SOMETHING I KNOW MUCH ABOUT, REALLY.

IT'S NOT LIKE I SAW *ANYTHING*.

EVERYTHING HAPPENED SO FAST.

DISENGAGE, THOMPSON.

DON'T DIG YOURSELF A HOLE.

THAT'S TOO BAD.

THE INQUISITOR IS *VERY* INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITY THAT VENOM HAS SET UP SHOP HERE IN PHILLY.

THERE'S *SIGNIFICANT COMPENSATION* BEING OFFERED FOR ANY LEADS.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY INFORMATION THAT CAN HELP...

...I'M SURE *SOMEONE* DOES.

AND-- HEY.

I FIGURE EVERYONE CAN USE A LITTLE EXTRA *BEER MONEY*.

I DON'T DRINK.

WELL, I DO.

MAYBE YOU CAN BUY ME A DRINK SOMETIME.

THE COMPANIONSHIP MIGHT JOG YOUR MEMORY.

AND HERE I THOUGHT I WAS DONE WITH THE THIRD DEGREE.

NO TELLING WHAT ANDI MIGHT ASK IF I DON'T SHUT HER DOWN...

...ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THAT SHE MIGHT HAVE SPOTTED ME USING THE SYMBIOTE A FEW DAYS AGO.

WHO WAS THAT?

YOUR GIRLFRIEND?

ANDI...

YOU WERE EAVESDROPPING. YOU KNOW PERFECTLY WELL SHE'S NOT MY GIRLFRIEND.

I DUNNO.

JUST SEEMED LIKE YOU KNEW EACH OTHER, IS ALL, BUT NEITHER ONE OF YOU WANTED TO ADMIT IT.

LIKE SOME SORT OF CREEPY ROLEPLAY KIND OF THING.

SORRY TO DISAPPOINT.

I...

I DON'T KNOW HER AT ALL.

KATY KIERNAN

Vintage Coin-Op Warehouse.

KATY #$%&#$% KIERNAN!

HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HER IN *WEEKS*...AND ALL OF A SUDDEN SHE SHOWS UP AT MY DAY JOB...ASKING ME ABOUT *VENOM!*

THAT WASN'T PART OF THE DEAL! WE WERE SUPPOSED TO HELP EACH OTHER!

BUT NOW IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S *TARGETING* ME FOR HER NEXT BIG *EXPOSÉ!*

EXTREME BOXI

SMASH!

SUPER PINBALL

PISSES ME OFF.

MORE THAN A LITTLE.

AND THESE GUYS PAY THE PRICE FOR THAT.

KLAW

URBAN FIGHT

HRRRRGGG

WHAM!

NOT LIKE THEY DON'T *DESERVE* IT.

KIDNAPPING PEOPLE FROM GOD-KNOWS-WHERE.

FORCING THEM TO WORK THEIR LABS.

OR *WORSE.*

GO! GET OUT OF HERE!

NOW!

THIS WAREHOUSE IS MORE THAN JUST A FRONT FOR ANOTHER DRUG LAB.

IT'S A NEST OF *SUFFERING.*

ALL IN THE NAME OF--

LORD OGRE. WHERE DO I FIND HIM?

Y-YOU... *DON'T...*

WON'T EVER FIND HIM...BUT HE...HE'S FOUND... HE KNOWS WHERE...YOU...

NNNNNN

DAMN.

PASSED OUT.

GUESS I SQUEEZED TOO HARD.

GOOD NEWS IS... DUMBASS THUGS ARE *NEVER* IN SHORT SUPPLY.

BLAM BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

BEEN TRACKING THIS THUG...*LORD OGRE*... FROM ONE ILLICIT OP.TO THE NEXT.

ALWAYS A STEP BEHIND HIM...AND HE COVERS ANY TRACKS THAT LEAD DIRECTLY TO HIM.

I'M *CLOSE*, THOUGH. I CAN FEEL IT.

OGRE'S GOT HIS FINGERS IN EVERY RACKET YOU CAN IMAGINE.

CRASH

HE'S A BIG FISH.

AND WHEN I FIND HIM, HE'S GONNA WISH--

WHHUUF!

SHHHH-WAKKOW

WHAP!

WHAT THE HELL? A *SHIELD*?

CAPTAIN AMERICA?

NO.

NOT CAP.

...PUNK-ASS AIN'T GONNA KNOW WHAT HITS HIM...

NICE SHOT, DEATH-SHIELD.

TAKE YOUR SHOT, JAGGED BOW.

FINISH HIM OFF AND LET'S CASH OUR CHECKS!

HASN'T ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU...

...PRETENDING TO BE SUPER HEROES IS DANGEROUS BUSINESS?

FUNNY.

WAS GONNA ASK YOU THE SAME THING.

GUY'S GOT SKILL.

ALMOST AS GOOD AS HAWKEYE.

JUST AS TRICKY, TOO!

AAARGH!

UKK!

CHK

YEEEEAAAARRRGH!

SONIC ARROWS.

WHOEVER THESE GUYS ARE...THEY CAME PREPARED.

SNAP

PREPARED TO HUNT *ME*.

MY TURN!

UNNF!

WHAM!

HITS LIKE A LOCOMOTIVE.

JUST AS STRONG AS SPIDEY.

DIDN'T YOU GET THE MEMO?

THERE'S ONLY ONE KNOCK-OFF WALL-CRAWLER ALLOWED IN PHILLY.

THWIP!

THWIP!

NAME'S *BLOOD-SPIDER!*

I'M *NOT* TRYING TO BE SPIDER-MAN!

YOU GOT THAT RIGHT!

I'VE *FOUGHT* SPIDER-MAN.

AND YOU *AREN'T* HIM!

RULUGGH!

SHRRPP! SHRRPP!

TOUGH LUCK FOR YOU.

NEITHER AM I.

RRRRAAAGH!

SMASH!

WHERE THE HELL DO THEY GROW THESE GUYS?

HE'S EVERY BIT AS TOUGH AS CAP HIMSELF!

THESE THREE... TOGETHER... ALMOST *OUTCLASS* ME.

WATCH—

OGRE'S PULLING OUT THE *BIG GUNS*.

CLANG!

BIG GUNS MIGHT BE ABLE TO LEAD ME RIGHT BACK TO THE *BOSS*.

GET 'EM WEBBED UP AND START ASKING QUESTIONS.

NEXT TIME...

...YOU SHOULD BRING MORE—

HRRK!

SSLLLWLLLL

ME AND MY BIG MOUTH.

HRRRRR--

CONSTRICTOR.

KZZZZT

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH ABOUT HIM TO KNOW HE'S *BAD NEWS.*

AND THE HITS JUST KEEP ON COMING.

LIKE I SAID... THERE'S ALWAYS *MORE* WHERE THAT CAME FROM.

I KNOW THIS GUY'S FILE, TOO... MR. DEATHSTRIKE...OR LORD DEATHSTRIKE...OR SOMETHING WITH "DEATH" IN IT.

Y-YOU... PUNKS...CAN GIVE UP ANY SECOND NOW.

JUST ABOUT TO GET MY... *SECOND WIND.*

HEY, PAL!

BACK OFF!

I NABBED HIM FIRST.

MY COLLAR, MY PAYDAY!

KZZT

KZZT

BOTH OF YOU BACK OFF!

WE WERE HERE FIRST!

NOT HARDLY.

BEEN CASING THIS JOINT FOR HOURS.

I SAW EVERY PAINFUL SECOND OF YOU AMATEURS GETTING YOUR ASSES HANDED TO YOU.

SOMETHING TELLS ME "SILENT BUT DEADLY" HAS BEEN HERE FOR A WHILE, TOO.

SO WHAT?

EITHER WAY, VENOM'S COMING WITH ME!

AND THERE AIN'T A THING--

KSHING

KSHING

AW, HELL NO!

KA-BOOM! BOOM!

SHZING

KTING

REALLY?

YOU JERKS ARE JUST BEING SORE LOSERS!

FACE IT-- THE BETTER MERC WON!

IF I HAVE TO KICK YOUR BUTTS TO PROVE IT...

FINE BY ME.

HEY...

WAIT A SECOND.

DID ANYBODY SEE WHERE *VENOM* WENT?

OGRE'S GOT HEAVY MUSCLE ON THE PAYROLL.

TOOK A MARKER OUT ON ME.

LURED ME RIGHT INTO A SHOOTING GALLERY.

WASTING MY TIME.

OGRE KNOWS I'M COMING FOR HIM.

THIS IS KATY. WHAT'S HAPPENING, HOT STUFF?

KIERNAN. WE NEED TO MEET.

HE'S BEEN FEEDING ME JUST ENOUGH BAIT TO KEEP ME EATING MY WAY UP THE LINE.

IF I'M GONNA SHUT HIM DOWN...

...IF I'M GONNA *SURVIVE*...

...I'M GONNA NEED BETTER *INTEL*.

THESE DAYS, OF COURSE, MY SOURCE SEEMS A LITTLE *RISKY*.

BUT I'M GONNA HAVE TO HAVE THIS *TALK* SOONER OR LATER.

KATY.

YOU KNOW...THE *FIRST* TIME WE MET WAS IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.

I REMEMBER.

IS THIS WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO SAY WE SHOULD STOP MEETING LIKE THIS?

(YOU LOOK LIKE HELL, BY THE WAY.)

I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT ME.

WELL...

LOOK AT YOU WITH YOUR EAR TO THE GROUND.

I THOUGHT WE HAD AN *UNDERSTANDING.*

IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT?

I THOUGHT WE WERE... I DUNNO... *FRIENDS.*

WE *ARE.*

BUT I ALSO HAVE BOSSES... BOSSES WHO ARE INTERESTED IN WHAT'S GOING ON HERE.

ASK YOURSELF...WHO DO YOU WANT POKING AROUND IN YOUR BUSINESS?

ME?

OR MAYBE SOME *OTHER* REPORTER WHO DOESN'T HAVE ANY *LOYALTY* TO YOU?

SO YOU'RE *LOYAL* TO ME?

IF I WANTED TO KNOW YOUR SECRET IDENTITY OR WHATEVER... I'D KNOW ALREADY.

AT LEAST WITH ME HERE...I CAN GUIDE THE PUBLICITY.

Y'KNOW... WHAT YOU'RE DOING...IT'S AN OLD TRICK.

USED TO BE PRETTY GOOD AT IT MYSELF.

IF YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH, YOU CAN CONVINCE SOMEONE THAT YOU'RE BULLYING THEM FOR THEIR *OWN GOOD*.

YOU THINK I'M *BULLYING* YOU?

DOESN'T MATTER.

BECAUSE... RIGHT NOW... I *NEED* YOU.

OF COURSE YOU DO.

I'M SERIOUS, KATY.

THIS GUY I'M AFTER-- I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM.

AND IF I STAND A CHANCE OF STOPPING HIM BEFORE HE KILLS ME, I NEED--

RESOURCES.

YOU KNOW... INFORMANTS...SPIES... FRIENDLIES.

WEAPONS SUPPLIERS... SAFE HOUSES... MAYBE EVEN A HEADQUARTERS.

IF YOU PLAN ON BEING PHILADELPHIA'S *DARK AVENGER*, YOU NEED *ASSETS*.

SOUNDS GREAT.

EXCEPT THERE'S ALREADY A CONTRACT ON MY HEAD.

WHATEVER I'M GONNA DO, IT'S GOTTA BE *FAST*.

LUCKILY, YOU'RE OFF TO A GOOD START.

BECAUSE YOU'VE GOT *ME*.

I WANT TO *THANK* YOU ALL FOR COMING.

Lord Ogre's Penthouse.

WHETHER YOU ARE HERE FOR THE MONEY... FOR THE HONOR... OR FOR THE THRILL OF THE HUNT...

...NO MATTER YOUR MOTIVES, CREED, OR CULT...

...YOU HAVE MY *GRATITUDE.*

LOOK AROUND YOU... BECAUSE *ONE* OF YOU...OR ONE OF THE OTHERS WHO ARRIVED EARLIER TODAY...WILL PROVE YOURSELF IN MY EYES...

...AND *KILL* AGENT VENOM LIKE THE DOG HE IS.

SOME MIGHT SAY THAT SENDING SO MANY ASSASSINS AFTER ONE MAN IS *OVERKILL.*

THEY'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE. OVERKILL IS WHAT I *WANT.*

OVERKILL IS A *TEACHER.*

AND THE APPRECIATION OF LORD OGRE IS NOT EASILY WON.

BEFORE THIS HUNT IS OVER... THIS VENOM...THIS WOULD-BE *BOGEYMAN...* WILL LEARN WHAT IT IS TO BE *AFRAID.*

FEAR *AND* MURDER-IN-EXCESS?

SOUNDS LIKE YER SINGING MY TUNE.

SORRY I'M A LITTLE LATE TO THE PARTY.

HAD A LITTLE TROUBLE SNAGGING A HALL-PASS.

BUT OL' JACK O'LANTERN'S THROWING HIS PUMPKIN INTO THE RING.

AND I THINK I'VE GOT A BIT OF AN EDGE OVER THESE OTHER YAHOOS.

AFTER ALL...

IT TAKES A BOGEYMAN TO KILL A BOGEYMAN.

VENOM #38
"KINDRED SPIRITS PART 2"

Philadelphia.

MORNIN' SUNSHINE.

SURE THING.

AND WHAT'S SO GOOD ABOUT IT?

DIDN'T SAY IT WAS GOOD.

JUST SAID MORNIN'.

WHICH IS WHAT IT IS.

WHAT'S FOR BREAKFAST, ANDREA?

WELL...WHILE THIS MAY LOOK LIKE A COLORFUL BOX OF SUGARY CEREAL, IT'S REALLY A COLORFUL BOX FULL OF EGGS BENEDICT, BELGIAN WAFFLES, AND FRESH FRUIT.

CEREAL SUITS ME JUST FINE. BREAKFAST OF CHAMPEENS.

AND THERE'S ALWAYS A TOY SURPRISE.

WHATEVER. NOBODY DOES TOYS ANYMORE, DAD, AND YOU KNOW IT.

YOU MIGHT GET AN ONLINE CODE OR SOMETHING.

SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND, KIDDO?

YOU EVER KNOW A *SECRET* ABOUT SOMEONE?

I MEAN A REALLY *IMPORTANT* SECRET?

I THINK I KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT SOMEONE.

...SOMEONE AT SCHOOL...

...AND THEY DON'T REALIZE I'VE FIGURED IT OUT...

...BUT IT'S THE KIND OF THING THAT...I DUNNO...IF IT WAS ME...I'D *WANT* TO TALK TO *SOMEBODY* ABOUT.

MAYBE IT'S *STUPID*...

...BUT I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE ABLE TO *HELP*.

HERE'S THE THING ABOUT SECRETS...

THEY HAVE A WAY OF *CRUSHING* PEOPLE... *HURTING* PEOPLE... EITHER THE PEOPLE WHO KEEP THEM...OR THE PEOPLE WHO GET *BLINDSIDED* BY THEM.

I MEAN... LOOK...YOUR MOM HAD SECRETS I ONLY *WISH* I COULD HAVE TALKED TO HER ABOUT.

I GUESS THAT'S NOT MUCH HELP.

I CAN'T SAY THAT I'VE EVER BEEN GOOD AT THE WHOLE "FATHERLY ADVICE" THING.

WELL...

"YOU DO THE *BEST* YOU CAN."

REALLY?

REALLY?

YOU'RE GONNA STICK WITH *THAT* DISGUISE?

I'M SORRY, BUT EVERY TIME I LOOK AT YOU I WANT TO LAUGH.

A BIG, BAD *AGENT VENOM* WALKING AROUND LOOKING *LIKE OLD MOTHER HUBBARD.*

DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY, GRANNY, BUT I'D BET A SHRINK WOULD HAVE A FIELD DAY WITH YOU.

LORD OGRE'S CALLED OUT ONE HELLUVA *MARKER,* KATY.

EVERY PSYCHO, HITMAN, AND MERCENARY IN THE FREE WORLD IS TARGETING ME.

BEST IF *VENOM* STAYS OUT OF SIGHT FOR A WHILE.

AND AS LONG AS MY IDENTITY'S A SECRET, YOU DON'T GET TO SEE THE REAL ME.

NOTHING WRONG WITH PLAYING IT SAFE, AGENT VENOM

BUT YOU MIGHT WANT TO THINK ABOUT GIVING THE BAD GUYS *SOMETHING* TO GO AFTER.

MY GUESS IS THAT THE *LAST* THING YOU WANT IS A BUNCH OF *DIRECTIONLESS KILLERS* ROAMING PHILLY.

IN THE MEANTIME, LET'S TALK *RESOURCES.*

YOU NEED 'EM. I KNOW WHERE TO FIND 'EM.

SO CHEER UP...

"...YOUR SUPER HERO OPERATION IS ABOUT TO MOVE TO THE *BIG LEAGUES.*"

MY NAME IS EUGENE "FLASH" THOMPSON.

AND AS OF TODAY I'M NO LONGER A *SOLO ACT* IN PHILLY.

KATY KIERNAN HAS CONTACTS... INFORMANTS... ASSETS...AND SHE'S *SHARING* THEM WITH ME.

LET'S FACE IT--THIS *LONE WOLF* BUSINESS ISN'T WORKING OUT.

I'M OUT HERE WITHOUT THE AID OF THE GOVERNMENT...WITHOUT THE AVENGERS...WITHOUT A *SAFETY NET.*

BAM BAM BAM

AND IF I'M GONNA BE THE HERO THE CITY DESERVES, THEN I NEED MY OWN NETWORK.

SPIES, ALLIES, *FRIENDLIES*...WHO MIGHT GIVE ME AN *EDGE* OVER THE BAD GUYS.

I NEED AN ACE OR TWO HIDDEN IN MY SYMBIOTIC SLEEVE.

SHZZIING SHZZIING

BECAUSE I'M A LITTLE TIRED OF THE BAD GUYS--MEN LIKE *LORD OGRE*--HOLDING ALL THE CARDS.

I'LL ADMIT...IT'S A LITTLE *SCARY*...THE PEOPLE KATY KNOWS.

NEED INFORMATION ON BIGFOOT? YOU GOT IT. WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE MAYOR HAD FOR DINNER? NO WORRIES.

A SKRULL PARTICLE WEAPON? WHAT MAKE AND MODEL?

CASHIER

BIG DISCOUNT

DOES *SPIDEY* WORK WITH THIS CALIBER OF PEOPLE?

PROBABLY NOT.

BUT I'M *NOT* THE SPIDER.

WE PLAY ON *DIFFERENT* FIELDS.

WE'RE PLAYING DIFFERENT *GAMES* ALTOGETHER.

HELL...I GREW UP *IDOLIZING* THE GUY...

...STILL DO...

...BUT I'LL NEVER GET THE HANG OF HOW HE DOES THINGS.

BANG

BANG

BANG

IT'S TIME TO STOP *PRETENDING*...

...AND START DOING THINGS *MY* WAY.

I'M A *DIFFERENT* KIND OF CREATURE...

...AND MY EYES AND EARS SPREAD THROUGH THE CITY...

...*INFECTING* IT...

...PHILLY IS MY *HOST* ORGANISM...

...AND I'M THE *SYMBIOTE*.

THWACK

NO TELLING HOW MANY HIRED GUNS LORD OGRE HAS BROUGHT INTO TOWN.

SEEMS LIKE THEY CRAWL OUT OF THE WOODWORK AT EVERY TURN.

ONE ASSASSIN MORE *FREAKY* THAN THE LAST.

LIKE THESE GUYS.

NINJAS...OR SOMETHING...WHO USE SHADOWS AS WEAPONS.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT'S NEXT.

COME ON!

BUY A *VOWEL* IF YOU NEED TO BUT-- *COME ON!*

THE ANSWER'S RIGHT THERE! RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOUR FACE!

I COULD'VE SOLVED THE PUZZLE THREE LETTERS AGO!

GETTING A LITTLE WORKED UP, AREN'T YOU, DAD?

IT'S *JUST* A GAME.

YOU KNOW... I'VE BEEN WATCHING THIS GAME... ALMOST EVERY NIGHT... SINCE LONG BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, MY DEAR.

NOW *THERE'S* AN ACCOMPLISHMENT.

I HOPE THAT'S ON YOUR RESUME.

OF COURSE.

IT'S LISTED RIGHT ALONGSIDE "SKILLED AT RAISING SMART-MOUTHED BRATS."

WHERE'RE YOU GOING? WANT ME TO PAUSE THIS?

NAH.

I'M GONNA GET SOME AIR.

BESIDES... I SOLVED THE PUZZLE *FOUR* LETTERS AGO.

COME ON!

SOLVE THE DAMN PUZZ--

SLAM

UH...

MR. THOMPSON?

IT'S ANDI.

IF YOU HAVE A FEW MINUTES, I THINK WE NEED TO TALK--

...

"NEED TO TALK?"

THOSE'RE WORDS YOU *NEVER* WANT TO HEAR FROM YOUR DOCTOR, YOUR LAWYER, OR THE *DOE-EYED GIRLIE* WHO LIVES UPSTAIRS!

I'M AFRAID *EUGENE* ISN'T HOME RIGHT NOW.

BUT COME ON IN, "ANDI."

ANY *TRUE CONFESSIONS* YOU MIGHT WANT TO SHARE WITH "MR. THOMPSON," YOU CAN SHARE WITH GOOD OL' JACK O'LANTERN..

I'M A GOOD LISTENER.

BESIDES... I NEED TO LEAVE OUR CRIPPLED FRIEND A *MESSAGE* MYSELF...

...AND I'M GONNA WRITE IT *IN YOUR* BLOOD!

OOOOH.

GONNA RUN, LITTLE RABBIT?

We wuv when they run!

We wuv when they scweam!

We wuv when they bweed!

UNF!

SHUNK!

DON'T PLAY HARD-TO-GET, GIRLIE!

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YER MISSING!

GONNA GIVE YOU THE *FULL-SERVICE* MUTILATION TREATMENT!

DAD!

ANDI?

W-WHAT IS IT?

WHAT'S WRONG?

CALL 9-1-1!

BLAG

GET HELP!

GET SOMEBODY--

YOOOOOOOOO!

KNOCK KNOCK!

Who's dere?

BOOM

Who's dere?

GO... AND I...

TRY TO GET TO THE FIRE ESCAPE.

THE GANG'S ALL HERE, HUH?

GOOD... BECAUSE YOU AND I NEED TO CHAT, DADDY DEAREST.

I WANT TO EXPLAIN MY INTENTIONS WITH YOUR DAUGHTER.

I WANT YOU TO CHOKE OUT A BLESSING BEFORE I START SLICING AND--

GET AWAY FROM THEM!

GGGKK!

CRASH

HOW IN THE @#$% DID JACK O'LANTERN GET OUT OF PRISON?

YOU'D THINK *SOMEBODY* MIGHT HAVE WARNED ME?

VRRRRRRR

GUY'S THE *WORST* SORT OF MANIAC.

ALWAYS KNEW HE'D TURN UP AGAIN...ALWAYS KNEW HE'D TRY TO GET TO ME THROUGH THE PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT.

REAL @#$%@ MOVE, JACK.

GONNA PUT YOU DOWN ONCE AND FOR ALL!

CAN I JUST SAY ONE THING IN MY DEFENSE?

Party pooper!

What a buzzkill!

BLARRFFOW!

RRRRAAGGGGH!

SHZZIIING

LET'S SEE IF THOSE FANCY DUDS OF YOURS CAN *REGROW* A HEAD.

RRRRR

Hot stuff coming thwough!

We wuv to burn you! To cut you!

HEY!

THWOP!

URRRK!

UNF!

THWACK

WHAT IS THIS? NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH?

ANDI'S LOVING POP COMING TO *YOUR* RESCUE?

BET THAT REALLY BURNS YOU UP, HUH, EUGENE?

THWPP! THWPP! SHWPP!

DAD!

YOUR OWN DAD PRETTY MUCH *HATED* YOUR DRUNK, CRIPPLED ASS.

BET HE WOULDN'T HAVE LIFTED A FINGER TO HELP HIS OWN KID...LET ALONE A COMPLETE *STRANGER*...

I MEAN...YOUR *DADDY ISSUES* RUN SO DEEP...YOU HAD TO MURDER MY FATHER.

THAT KIND OF THING LEFT ME WITH SOME REAL *ANGER* PROBLEMS, Y'KNOW?

TRYING TO HOLD HIM BACK...BUT HE'S TOO STRONG, MOVING TOO FAST.

TEARING AND SLIPPING OUT OF MY GRIP.

LEAVE THEM *ALONE!*

THIS IS BETWEEN YOU AND ME!

RRRRP! SHRRRP!

JUST FOR A SECOND.

BUT A SECOND CHANGES EVERYTHING.

SORRY, EUGENE.

PAYBACK'S A BITCH.

HHHTT!

DAD!

SSHHHHHHNNNNNK

NOOOOO!

GOTTA EXPAND THE FAMILIAL PSYCHOSIS FOOTPRINT, AFTER ALL.

I--KILL YOU!

SLAM

NNN

TK TK TK

NICE ONE, EUGENE. BUT YOU...GOTTA DO *BETTER.*

I HOPE...YOU REALIZE...I WOULDA KILLED YOU WITH OR WITHOUT THE BOUNTY LORD OGRE PUT ON YOUR HEAD.

TK TK TK

THIS AIN'T ABOUT THE MONEY.

TK TK TK

CHOMP

CHOMP

SNAP

MAYBE I'LL USE THE REWARD FOR CHARITY.

MAYBE I'LL DONATE TO AN ORPHAN'S FUND!

THE LANTERN'S TOYING WITH ME.

HERE, ANDI... CATCH!

WANTS TO SEE ME SUFFER.

SWOOSH

POISON GAS.

IF I KNOW JACK, IT'LL BE FAST-ACTING... PAINFUL...LETHAL.

TSSSSSSS

HE WANTS ME TO KNOW I CAN'T PROTECT THE PEOPLE AROUND ME.

WANTS ME TO KNOW...THEY'RE IN DANGER... *BECAUSE* OF ME.

COULDN'T SAVE ANDI'S DAD...

...BUT I'M NOT GONNA LET HER DIE!

+Kaff!+ +Koff!+ +Kaff!+

THE SYMBIOTE ACTS AS LIFE SUPPORT...

...*FILTERING* HAZARDS LIKE POISON FROM THE AIR.

IF I EXTEND PART OF VENOM TO ANDI, I MIGHT JUST--

--MAKE SOMETHING COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED HAPPEN.

UH...

...COACH?!

VENOM #39
"KINDRED SPIRITS CONCLUSION"

Andi Benton's Apartment.

I... I...

WHAT IS... THIS?

WHAT...

WHAT DID YOU DO...TO... ME?

I THINK SHE'S TALKING TO YOU, HOSS.

JACK O'LANTERN... TRIED TO *POISON* ANDI...WOULD HAVE *KILLED* HER.

I WANTED TO USE THE SYMBIOTE TO *PROTECT* HER.

BUT...NOT LIKE *THIS*.

ACTED ON INSTINCT.

BUT THE SYMBIOTE'S BEEN TWITCHY LATELY.

DAD?

NO...THAT'S NOT RIGHT. THE SYMBIOTE'S NOT SOME HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCE.

YOU... MURDERED HIM.

IT'S ALIVE. IT HAS A MIND OF ITS OWN.

IT'S UNPREDICTABLE.

TRY AS I MIGHT, I CAN'T CONTROL IT.

I'M...

...GONNA...

SGGKGGLK

KILL YOU!

TH-THWOK!

HRRRRGG

You're mean!

Leave Wacky-Jacky alone!

FWOOSH!

GET OFF!

I'm gonna thwow up!

LET'S JUST TURN THIS 'OLE PUMPKIN AROUND.

AHH! BETTER!

GOTTA BE ABLE TO *SEE* WHO I'M KILL--

KILL THIS!

WHOMP!

THE LANTERN'S A WALKING, TALKING NIGHTMARE.

RRRGG

THE BLOOD ON HIS HANDS WILL *NEVER* COME CLEAN.

IF HE GOES BACK TO PRISON...HE'S JUST GOING TO BREAK OUT *AGAIN*... KILL *AGAIN*.

NOT GONNA HAPPEN.

KRASH

HE'S *FINISHED*.

ONCE AND FOR ALL.

BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET *ANDI* KILL HIM.

JACK IS *MY* RESPONSIBILITY, NOT HERS.

HRRRNF!

SLAM!

I'M THE SOLDIER. I MAKE THE TOUGH CALLS.

SHE'S JUST A *GIRL*. SHE'S NOT A--

--KILLER.

RRAAAAAGHH!

GET OFF!

ANDI! NO!

LET GO!

GET OFF ME!
LET ME KILL THIS PIECE OF @#%!
THAT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN!
CALM DOWN!
LOOK AT HIM!
LOOK AT HIM!
THAT'S...
THAT'S *NOT* JACK O'LANTERN!
BUT HOW--
WHO THE @#% *ARE* YOU?
HOW DID YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
DON'T YOU GET IT, *EUGENE?*
YOU'RE *NEVER* GONNA SLIP AWAY FROM US.
YOU CAN'T RUN FAR ENOUGH OR FAST ENOUGH.
YOU CAN'T HIDE BEHIND A MASK OR BOTTLE OR A TEACHING POSITION.
NO MATTER *WHAT* YOU DO, YOU'RE GONNA *PAY* FOR YOUR SINS.
WE'RE *JACK*, BABY... AND WE'RE *EVERYWHERE!*

"O' COURSE, JUST A FEW WEEKS AGO, I WAS JUST A *NOBODY*.

"WORKING AT A STORAGE FACILITY, DAY IN AND DAY OUT.

E 02

E 01

"I DIDN'T HAVE A CLUE THAT JACK--THE *REAL* JACK, WHO'S STILL COOLING HIS HEELS IN PRISON--HAD LEFT ME A *LITTLE SURPRISE* IN ONE OF THE UNITS."

Help me... help...pwease help me...

E 40-50

Pwlease help me... help...save me...

SNAP

E 40-50

Oh, my hewo!

Wook into my eyes!

"MY HEAD...USELESS AS IT WAS UP UNTIL THAT MOMENT... WAS SUDDENLY PACKED WITH ALL THE *GOOD* STUFF...

"ALL THE JUICY LITTLE MORSELS THAT THE REAL JACK HAD RECORDED BEFORE BEING APPREHENDED.

"THIS MEAT SACK'S WEAK LITTLE MIND WAS OVERWRITTEN SO JACK'S GOOD WORK COULD CONTINUE."

AND BY "GOOD WORK" I MEAN THE WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER OF EVERY BANAL LITTLE LAMB WHO JUST MEWLS THROUGH THE DAY-TO-DAY GRIND.

AND-- OF COURSE-- REVENGE FOR THE SENSELESS MURDER OF MY DAD.

HMM. WHO DID THAT AGAIN?

OH, YEAH-- YOU.

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH. TIME TO--

NO!

DON'T YOU SEE? THIS GUY'S A VICTIM.

HE KILLED MY DAD!

HE'S BEEN HYPNOTIZED OR MIND-CONTROLLED OR WHATEVER.

THE REAL GUY... HE NEVER WANTED THIS.

THAT'S RIGHT.

I WAS FORCED INTO MY LITTLE PREDICAMENT, GIRL.

A LOT LIKE YOU WERE FORCED INTO YOURS.

BUT I GOTTA TELL YA...

...IT HURTS SO GOOD!

HE'S GETTING AWAY!

CRASH

I'M WRONG. AGAIN.

SHOCKER.

IN EVERY WAY THAT MATTERS, THIS GUY *IS* JACK O'LANTERN.

THAT MEANS HE'LL LEAVE A BODY COUNT ANYWHERE HE GOES.

NO TIME TO WAIT.

NO TIME TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON WITH ANDI.

THERE'S NO TELLING HOW MANY PEOPLE MIGHT DIE IF I DON'T BRING HIM DOWN.

FIRST I WANT TO KILL HIM... THEN I DON'T... THEN I WANT TO.

I DUNNO.

MAKE A DECISION, THOMPSON!

HOLD ON!

WAIT FOR ME!

I CAN'T LET YOU COME WITH ME, ANDI.

AS IF I HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THE *RIGHT* DECISION MIGHT BE.

WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT?

HE'S GETTING AWAY!

THE GUY WHO KILLED MY DAD IS SLIPPING RIGHT THROUGH YOUR FINGERS!

AND YOU *CAN'T* STOP ME!

YEAH.

I CAN.

GOTTA MAKE THE RIGHT CALL HERE.

WE CAN SORT EVERYTHING OUT *LATER*.

FOR NOW, YOU JUST NEED TO WAIT THIS OUT... SOMEWHERE *SAFE*.

A TEENAGER RUNNING AROUND WEARING A PIECE OF THE VENOM SYMBIOTE.

SHE'LL GET HERSELF KILLED.

NOT IF I CALL IT BACK--

ARE YOU DONE?

DIDN'T WORK.

COULDN'T RETRIEVE THE SYMBIOTE.

BUT IT'S JUST A *SATELLITE*, A *FRAGMENT*. THE BOND SHOULDN'T BE...

...*PERMANENT*.

WHATEVER THAT WAS--

--DON'T--

--TRY IT AGAIN!

AND GET OUT OF MY WAY.

THE STRENGTH, THE SPEED, THE AGILITY...

...THE WEB-SLINGING...THE POWERS...

...SHE ADAPTED SO *QUICKLY*, LIKE SHE'S BEEN WEARING THE SYMBIOTE FOR YEARS INSTEAD OF MINUTES.

SHE'S A NATURAL.

HOW IS SHE A NATURAL?

THIS ISN'T GONNA END WELL.

YEEAARGH!

SHRAK

UNNF!

WHAT THE HELL IS *THIS?*

THIS AIN'T *VENOM.*

IT'S LIKE... SOME *KID* DRESSED AS VENOM.

THOSE'RE *GOOD* EYES YOU'VE GOT THERE, *CONSTRICTOR.*

BUT THIS IS THE NEXT BEST THING.

THIS IS VENOM'S LITTLE *SIDEKICK.*

IT'S *COOL.*

YOU CAN KILL HER.

FIRST OF ALL, LET'S GET SOMETHING CLEAR.

I DON'T WORK FOR *YOU,* SO DON'T TELL ME WHO I CAN AND CAN'T ICE.

SECOND OF ALL, I MIGHT BE A BAD GUY, BUT I AIN'T GONNA HURT A *KID.*

AND I WON'T LET YOU DO IT, EITHER.

OKAY... I ADMIRE A GUY WITH *PRINCIPLES.*

BUT...

TSK

YOU SHOULDA TOLD *HIM* THAT.

GET AWAY FROM HER!

RRRLILLINNNF!

WOOMPF!

LORD OGRE...THE LOCAL CRIME LORD...HIRED--I DUNNO--A COUPLE DOZEN *ASSASSINS* TO TAKE ME OUT OF THE PICTURE.

ALL OF YOU--

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

--BACK OFF!

KTING

KTING

KTING

JACK O'LANTERN LED US STRAIGHT INTO THEIR WAITING ARMS.

WATCH OUT!

FWHUMP!

NICE SAVE. THANKS.

NO PROBLEM, COACH.

WRACK!

REEAAKK!

ISN'T THAT *SWEET!* THE STUDENT BECOMES THE TEACHER!

BUT THIS IS THE PART OF THE MOVIE WHERE MR. MIYAGI GETS HIS HEAD LOPPED OFF AND HIS BRAINS SCOOPED OUT!

THAT'S HOW THE MOVIE ENDS, RIGHT?

WOOOFF!

SLAM!

ANDI'S *HIGH* ON THE SYMBIOTE'S POWER.

IT'S FUELING HER *ANGER*...

...USING *RAW EMOTION* TO CEMENT THE BOND BETWEEN THEM...

...URGING HER TO SEAL THE DEAL...

...IN *BLOOD*.

GGRRKKCCGLK!

AND!--

--DON'T!

DON'T DO THIS!

SHE'S NOT GONNA LISTEN.

YOU GO DOWN THIS PATH...

...THERE'S NO COMING BACK.

NOT LIKE THE SUIT *EVER* LISTENED TO ME.

NOT LIKE I EVER LISTENED *MYSELF.*

GNNGGK

WHY? WHY'D YOU DO THIS TO ME?

THIS GUY DOESN'T DESERVE ANOTHER SECOND ON EARTH!

NOT IF MY DAD DOESN'T GET ONE!

WHY'D YOU *GIVE* ME THIS POWER IF YOU DIDN'T WANT ME TO *USE* IT?

I WAS TRYING TO *PROTECT* YOU.

AND...NOT GONNA LIE...IF I COULD TAKE THAT SYMBIOTE BACK, I WOULD.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED... WHAT WENT *WRONG*...

BUT I DO KNOW WEARING THAT SUIT COMES WITH A *COST.*

IF YOU LET ME, I'LL SHOULDER SOME OF THE BURDEN WITH YOU.

BUT IF YOU KILL HIM...WHETHER HE DESERVES IT OR NOT...YOU'RE *ON YOUR OWN.*

EVEN IF YOU HAD THE WORLD ON YOUR SIDE...YOU'LL BE *ALONE.*

I'M TELLING YOU... I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

COME ON, KID.

MAKE THE *RIGHT* CHOICE.

AND I...I *PROMISE* YOU... WE'LL FIGURE THIS OUT.

ALL OF IT.

BUT FOR NOW...

REEE-OOO-REEEE-O

"...IT'S TIME TO GET GONE."

TOOK A FEW DAYS FOR THINGS TO SETTLE DOWN.

I CAN'T SAY THAT ANYTHING'S BACK TO *NORMAL*, THOUGH.

NOT SURE I'VE *EVER* SEEN THE RIGHT SIDE OF NORMAL.

BUT I DO MY BEST TO *FAKE* IT...

...ALONE.

AFTER HER FATHER'S FUNERAL, ANDI MOVED IN WITH HER AUNT IN JENKINTOWN.

WE KEEP IN TOUCH, OF COURSE.

ONE OF MY NEW SUPPLIERS HOOKED US UP WITH UNTRACEABLE STARKPHONES.

THINK OF THEM AS THE *VENOM-HOTLINE*.

I'VE GOT MY EAR TO THE GROUND.

CONTACTS DIGGING UP EVERYTHING THEY CAN ON LORD OGRE'S OPERATION.

THE ASSASSINS HE HIRED AREN'T TALKING. THEY MUST'VE BEEN PAID WELL FOR THEIR SILENCE.

AND THE...FAKE... JACK SLIPPED INTO A COMA NOT LONG AFTER BEING TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

BRAIN DEAD. APPARENTLY, JACK GIVES AND TAKES AWAY.

I'VE ASKED ANDI TO KEEP HER COOL...TO LAY LOW UNTIL I CAN FIGURE OUT HER...

...SITUATION.

I DON'T THINK SHE'S REALLY HONORING THE AGREEMENT, THOUGH. SHE KEEPS BUSY.

IN THE UNANSWERED QUESTIONS DEPARTMENT, I'M NECK DEEP.

HOW DID MY SYMBIOTE SPAWN ANOTHER LIKE THAT?

AND HOW DID ANDI GET UP TO SPEED SO *QUICKLY?*

I THINK I KNOW WHO TO ASK.

BUT HE'S NOT TALKING.

YET.

VENOM #40
"MANIA PART 1"

A MAN GETS BEATEN TO DEATH IN AN ALLEY.

WHEN HE STEPPED INTO THE DARKNESS DID HE *KNOW* HE WAS GOING TO DIE?

DID HE *WANT* TO MEET HIS END RATHER THAN FACE WHAT THE *WORLD* MIGHT *BECOME?*

IF I HAD BEEN THERE TO SAVE HIM, WOULD HE *THANK* ME?

OR WOULD HE SPIT IN MY EYE AND *CURSE* ME FOR INTERFERING?

IF HE DIDN'T WANT TO DIE, HE WOULD HAVE FOUGHT BACK, RIGHT?

RAGE.

"RAGE AGAINST THE DYING OF THE LIGHT."

OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

IF HE FOUGHT BACK, WOULD ANYONE TAKE NOTICE?

OR WOULD HIS *SACRIFICE* BE MORE *NOTEWORTHY?*

NO.

THE WORLD DOESN'T NOTICE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

THE WORLD'S GOT *BIGGER PROBLEMS* TO WORRY ABOUT.

WHU--

WHU--

Philadelphia.

ANDI!?

WHAT--

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?*

WAITING FOR YOU.

YEAH...

OKAY.

IT'S JUST...

...Y'KNOW...

...A LITTLE *WEIRD.*

OH?

DID I *FREAK* YOU OUT, COACH THOMPSON?

WAKE YOU FROM A *PLEASANT DREAM?*

SORRY ABOUT THAT, *SLEEPING BEAUTY.*

NOW.

VENOM UP AND LET'S GO.

HOLD ON.
GIVE ME A SECOND TO WAKE UP. GET SOME BREAKFAST... MAYBE SOME COFFEE.
IT'S BROAD DAYLIGHT OUT.
JUST COOL YOUR JETS, ALL RIGHT?
COOL MY JETS?
MY DAD'S DEAD!
AND I CAN'T EVEN TAKE THE TIME TO BE SAD ABOUT IT, BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WHO KILLED HIM ARE STILL OUT THERE!
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN? THREE WEEKS!
AND WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED *NOTHING!*
IT TAKES *TIME.*
KID'S GOT EVERY RIGHT TO BE ANGRY.
ANGRY AT *ME.*
HOW LONG DO WE *NEED* TO STOP THE BAD GUYS?
WE'VE GOT LEADS WE CAN FOLLOW... RESOURCES WE CAN TAP.
WE'RE *SUPER HEROES* FOR GOD'S SAKE!
JACK O'LANTERN CAME AT ME THROUGH HER FAMILY.
THIS IS *MY* FAULT.
FIRST OF ALL, *WE'RE* NOT SUPER HEROES.
I'M NOT. YOU *MOST CERTAINLY* AREN'T.
ALL OF IT.
BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.
IT TAKES *TIME*...GETTING *USED* TO A SYMBIOTE.
LORD KNOWS *I'M* STILL ADJUSTING.
I'M STILL NOT SURE HOW THE SYMBIOTE *BONDED* TO HER SO *QUICKLY.*

THE CONNECTION FORMED FAST--

I GET IT.

I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU WANT TO FIND LORD OGRE AND--

KILL HIM.

--AGGRESSIVELY.

THAT DOESN'T EVEN *SOUND* LIKE YOU.

I WAS TRYING TO *PROTECT* HER...NOT *CREATE*--

--WHATEVER IT IS SHE'S BECOME.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW I'M SUPPOSED TO SOUND!

YOU BARELY EVEN *KNOW* ME!

YOU'RE RIGHT.

BUT I KNOW *SYMBIOTES*.

AND I MIGHT BE IN OVER MY HEAD HERE.

THIS HUNGER FOR REVENGE...

...THIS *MANIA*...

...THAT *SEEMS* LESS LIKE THE GIRL I *THINK* I KNOW AND MORE LIKE A *SYMBIOTE*.

WELL...

...MAYBE THE SYMBIOTE UNDERSTANDS ME *BETTER* THAN YOU DO.

BRR-ZZZZZ!
BRR-ZZZZZ!
BRR-ZZZZZ!
BRR-ZZZZZ!
HOLD ON.
JUST... HOLD ON.
YEAH.
AGENT VENOM.
KATY.
WHAT'S UP?
I HOPE YOU'VE EITHER GOT A VENOM-JET OR A FEW FREQUENT FLYER MILES SAVED UP.
BECAUSE YOU NEED TO GET YOUR ASS TO AUSTIN.
THERE'S SOMETHING HERE YOU'VE GOT TO SEE.
GET HERE. I'LL CALL LATER.
UH...
WHAT IS IT?
I'VE GOT TO GO OUT OF TOWN FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS.
I WANT YOU TO *PROMISE* ME SOMETHING, ANDI.
I WANT YOU TO PROMISE YOU'LL SIT TIGHT UNTIL I RETURN.
AND THEN WHAT?
THEN...

"...WE'LL TAKE LORD OGRE DOWN ONCE AND FOR ALL.

"TOGETHER."

Austin, Texas.

KATY KIERNAN IS A FREELANCE REPORTER SPECIALIZING IN THE WEIRD AND BIZARRE.

THAT MEANS FREAKS LIKE ME ARE HER BREAD AND BUTTER.

THIS BETTER BE IMPORTANT.

WE HAVE AN... *UNDERSTANDING.*

MEANING SHE TAKES GREAT DELIGHT IN SHOWING ME THINGS THAT SIMPLY RUIN MY DAY.

AGENT VENOM?

THAT'S AN *INTERESTING* LOOK FOR YOU.

IT'S A DISGUISE.

NO KIDDING.

CAN WE GET ON WITH THIS, PLEASE?

I'VE GOT A CITY TO PROTECT, AND I'M A LONG WAY FROM HOME.

DON'T GET YOUR GOOEY PARTS IN A BUNCH.

I WOULDN'T BRING YOU ALL THIS WAY FOR NOTHING.

KATY... AH... LOOK...

I COULD GET IN A LOT OF--

WE WON'T BE LONG, BARRY.

AND I'D NEVER DO *ANYTHING* TO JEOPARDIZE OUR WORKING RELATIONSHIP.

JUST GIVE US A MINUTE.

OKAY?

SOMETHING TELLS ME YOU'VE GOT A BUNCH OF LOVESICK GUYS WORKING IN MORGUES IN EVERY MAJOR CITY IN THE COUNTRY.

NONSENSE.

I'VE *NEVER* BEEN ABLE TO CRACK ST. LOUIS.

BUT HERE YOU GO.

FEAST YOUR EYES.

IS THAT--

--DAIMON HELLSTROM?

LOOKS LIKE HIM, DOESN'T IT?

ONLY...HE'S BEEN *SKINNED*... THE PENTAGRAM *STRIPPED* RIGHT OFF HIM.

LIKE I SAID...

...KATY REALLY SEEMS TO LOVE TAKING A #$%@ ON MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE.

IT. CAN'T BE HIM.

HE'S LOCKED UP. I PUT HIM AWAY IN VIRGINIA.

YEAH... WELL, I'M ALSO GETTING REPORTS OF HIM POPPING UP ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

MAYBE HE'S *SPAWNING*... YOU KNOW...LIKE ONE OF YOU *SYMBIOTES*.

FUNNY.

SPEAKING OF WHICH...

WHERE'S YOUR LITTLE *SIDEKICK*?

SHE'S *NOT* MY SIDEKICK.

WE'RE...

WE'RE WORKING THAT OUT.

ANYWAY, SHE'S SITTING THIS ONE OUT...

"...LAYING LOW IN PHILLY."

GET BACK! GET BACK!

OUT OF THE WAY!

MOVE!

IT'S HIM!

IT'S VENOM!

YOU VERMIN COULDN'T BE SO LUCKY.

THE DEVIL HERSELF HAS COME FOR YOU.

YOU ONLY WISH I WAS VENOM.

BUT ME...

YOU CAN CALL ME--

--MANIA!

YOU'RE GONNA DIE *SCREAMING* THAT NAME UNLESS SOMEONE TELLS ME WHERE TO FIND--

I'M RIGHT *HERE*, GIRL.

COME AND GET ME.

LORD OGRE!

KNEEL DOWN AND PRAY WHEN YOU SAY HIS NAME!

SLSSSSSH!

HEH.

NNNNN

YOU HEAR THAT?

HE'S BEGGING.

GGGHKK GGK

BEGGING US TO KILL YOU!

I DON'T THINK HE'S GOT MUCH TIME LEFT.

DON'T KEEP HIM WAITING.

SHUSH!

MMPPPGGH!

RUUHH!

SMASH!

NOT BAD, GIRL.

BUT I'M NO COMMON STREET THUG.

I'M NOT FRIGHTENED BY A CHILD IN A *MONSTER* MASK.

I'M THE *ONLY* MONSTER HERE!

I'M LORD @#$%&% OGRE!

I'M THE *REAL* DEAL!

I *KNOW* WHAT YOU ARE.

AND YOU MIGHT NOT BE *AFRAID* OF A GIRL IN A MASK...

...BUT IT SURE LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE RUNNING FOR YOUR LIFE.

YOU'RE A GUY WHO HIDES BEHIND CARNIVAL FREAKS.

YOU SEND HENCHMEN TO KILL A GIRL'S FATHER BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT MAN ENOUGH TO STRIKE AT YOUR *REAL* TARGETS.

The Peak Maximum Security Prison.

VIRGINIA.

"THERE'S SOMETHING *DIFFERENT* ABOUT YOU, OFFICER COLLINS."

DAIMON HELLSTROM.

THE SON OF SATAN.

NEW AFTER-SHAVE?

TRIED TO RAM A DEMON RIGHT DOWN MY THROAT AND INTO MY SOUL.

CUT THE CRAP. YOU KNOW IT'S ME.

AH, YES. AGENT VENOM.

I SUPPOSE IT'S DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO GET AN APPOINTMENT AFTER YOUR LAST LITTLE OUTBURST.

I *HATE* THIS GUY.

EVEN HERE...AFTER I'VE BEEN MOVED TO THESE NEW LUXURY ACCOMMODATIONS...I DOUBT ANYONE WANTS THE *REAL* YOU LURKING ABOUT.

I CERTAINLY HOPE YOU HAVEN'T EATEN POOR COLLINS' BRAIN.

I *LIKED* COLLINS.

FORGET THE DEMON... FORGET THAT SMARMY SMILE THAT MAKES ME WANT TO BUST HIS TEETH IN.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, AGENT?

THE THING THAT REALLY MAKES ME *LOATHE* THIS GUY?

HE SCARES THE HELL OUT OF ME.

FUNNY THING.

JUST YESTERDAY I WAS LOOKING AT A DEAD BODY.

YOUR DEAD BODY.

HMM.

THAT'S *DISCONCERTING.*

WHEN IT COMES TO *MAGIC*, THERE'S A LOT I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

BUT THIS MAN...YOU... WHOEVER HE WAS... HE WAS *SKINNED.*

HIS MURDERER *RIPPED* THAT *PENTAGRAM* RIGHT OFF HIM.

THAT GOT ME THINKING.

MAYBE THIS HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE *DESCENT* YOU'VE TOLD ME SO MUCH ABOUT.

A BUNCH OF *HELL-LORDS* ARE MARKING SUITABLE *REPLACEMENTS.*

MAYBE THERE'S ANOTHER PLAYER OUT THERE WHO WANTS TO ELIMINATE THE *COMPETITION.*

AND MAYBE YOUR EVIL, EVIL TWIN WAS JUST ANOTHER *VICTIM.*

WHEN THE DESCENT COMES TO PASS, *SOMEONE* WHO BEARS ONE OF THESE MARKS *WILL* BECOME A HELL-LORD.

WHILE YOU MIGHT NOT SEE THE APPEAL, THERE ARE MORE THAN A FEW WHO WOULD *MURDER* FOR THAT HONOR.

OF COURSE PEOPLE LIKE *ME* ARE POTENTIAL *TARGETS.*

YOU MEAN LIKE *US*, DON'T YOU?

YOU SAID I'D BEEN CHOSEN AS ONE OF *MEPHISTO'S LAPDOGS* BACK IN VEGAS.*

YOU SAID I BORE THE MARK.

I'M AFRAID *NOT*, AGENT VENOM.

BACK IN VENOM 23
--SYMBIOTIC SANA.

YOU'RE NOT MARKED.

WHAT?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I'M LOOKING AT YOU... RIGHT NOW...WITH MY *DEVIL'S* EYES.

MY *TRUE* EYES.

AND YOU'RE NO LONGER MARKED.

BUT... HOW COULD THAT BE?

AND...MORE IMPORTANTLY... IF *I'M* NOT MARKED...

"...WHO IS?"

THERE SHE IS.

ARE YOU SURE, CROSSBONES?
UH... SIR...
LOOKS LIKE A *KID* TO ME.
DON'T SEE HOW THAT CHANGES A THING.
WE'RE COLLECTING *HELL-MARKS.*
THERE AIN'T BUT ONE WAY TO GET THEM.
WE *HUNT* HER.
WE *KILL* HER.
"AND WE *SKIN* HER."

VENOM #41
"MANIA PART 2"

"THE *DESCENT.*

"THE DAY ONE OF THE HELL LORDS WOULD BECOME THE DEVIL.

"AND ONE OF US...THE *MARKED*... WOULD BECOME A DEMON IN OUR OWN RIGHT.

"WHEN I FIRST HEARD ABOUT IT, I DIDN'T KNOW *WHAT* TO BELIEVE.

"DID I WANT THIS *POWER?* THIS *HONOR?*

"DID I WANT TO RUN AWAY IN FEAR...TO HIDE UNDER THE COVERS LIKE A CHILD?

"DID I WANT TO FIGHT AGAINST IT?

"THE TRUTH IS...I WANTED IT *ALL.* AND *MORE.*

"THE NICE THING ABOUT BEING *DAIMON HELLSTROM,* THE *SON OF SATAN*...

"...YOU CAN HAVE YOUR CAKE AND EAT IT, TOO.

"I SENT THEM OUT INTO THE WORLD...MY *SHADOWS*...TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES FROM EVERY ANGLE.

"HEROES... VILLAINS...SEERS... SPIES.

"BECOMING... AND DOING... WHATEVER FREE WILL WOULD ALLOW..."

...I WANTED THEM TO EXPLORE EVERY POSSIBLE FACET OF THE COMING DESCENT.

BUT MY...*OTHERS*... WERE TOO HEAD-STRONG. SOME OF THEM DIDN'T EVEN *BELIEVE.*

I COULDN'T TELL YOU... NOT WITH ANY DEGREE OF CERTAINTY...

...IF I'M EVEN THE *ORIGINAL.*

SO...YOU'RE--WHAT--A *COPY* OF DAIMON HELLSTROM?

POSSIBLY.

AND A *FLAWED* COPY AT THAT.

I'VE FALLEN SO FAR.

YEAH.

IT'S ALWAYS A WAKEUP CALL WHEN YOU HIT *ROCK BOTTOM,* HUH?

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MARKS?

THE ONE *MEPHISTO* BRANDED ME WITH...

...YOU SAID IT WAS--

GONE, AGENT VENOM.

AND YOU SHOULD COUNT YOURSELF *LUCKY.*

NOT ONLY ARE YOU FREE OF ANY *INFERNAL OBLIGATION*...BUT IT WOULD SEEM SOMEONE IS HUNTING THE MARKED FOR THEIR SKINS.

SOME OF MY... *OTHER*...SELVES HAVE ALREADY BEEN *MURDERED.*

IT WOULD SEEM I'M *SAFEST* RIGHT HERE.

NICE TO SEE YOU'RE MORE WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF--

MY OWN *SKIN,* SO TO SPEAK.

--THAN THE OTHERS WHO ARE OUT THERE RIGHT NOW...AND STILL IN DANGER.

MAYBE YOU *DON'T* KNOW WHAT ROCK BOTTOM FEELS LIKE JUST YET.

BUT YOU'RE DAMN SURE ON YOUR WAY DOWN.

Philadelphia.

LORD OGRE'S PENTHOUSE.

SO...YOU THINK HE'S GONNA FIND US?

VENOM, I MEAN.

SOONER OR LATER, YEAH. WE'RE GONNA BE FOUND.

QUESTION IS, IS IT GONNA BE VENOM THAT FINDS US...OR THE OTHER ONE...THE ONE WHO TORE UP THE FREAK SHOW THE OTHER NIGHT?

YOU MEAN THE *GIRL?*

WHAT'S SHE CALLED? *SHE-VENOM?*

IF WE'RE GONNA RUN UP AGAINST ONE OF THEM, I'D RATHER IT BE A GIRL THAN--

UH...

YEEEEEDAADDADRRGGH!

CR-CRASH!

KRAK!

AH. SHE'S HERE.

LET US GUT HER--

NO. LET HER COME.

LET'S SEE IF THIS CHILD IS *HALF* THE BEAST SHE'D HAVE US BELIEVE.

OGRE!

KKKK

NO MORE RUNNING, TOUGH GUY!

NO.

NO MORE RUNNING...FOR *EITHER* OF US.

BUT CHOICES?

HRRK!

YES.

WE STILL HAVE *CHOICES* TO MAKE.

AND NOW IS THE TIME.

SO EAGER TO *KILL.*

NEVER CONSIDERING THE *CONSEQUENCES.*

NEVER CONSIDERING THAT WHEN I DIE, MY GOSPEL WILL SPREAD ON THE WIND.

SO MANY PEOPLE...DYING... BREATHING THEIR LAST BREATH.

NEVER KNOWING WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM.

NEVER KNOWING THE NAME OF THE PERSON WHO KILLED THEM...WHO UNLEASHED A *DEATH-CLOUD* TO WASH OVER THEM.

AND THAT NAME...WOULD IT BE *LORD OGRE?*

OR *MANIA?*

A...A *BOMB?* SOME SORT OF CHEMICAL WEAPON?

AND...IF YOU DIE...YOU TAKE A GOOD CHUNK OF THE POPULATION WITH YOU?

YOU'D KILL *EVERYONE*... JUST LIKE THAT?

AMEN.

GUESS I CAN'T SIMPLY KILL YOU THEN, HUH?

THAT'S A REAL @#$% MOVE. YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

PLAYING THE *COWARD* CARD LIKE THAT...

...AND I'M STILL GONNA BOUNCE YOU ON YOUR ASS.

SEE...I'M PRETTY MUCH *PROTECTED* FROM CHEMICALS AND TOXIC GASES.

THAT'S HOW I PUT UP WITH YOUR B.O.

AND IF KILLING YOU MEANS DROPPING A BUNCH OF OTHER PEOPLE I DON'T KNOW...

...I CAN *LIVE* WITH IT.

WHAT--

WHAT ARE YOU *SAYING?*

I'M SAYING...

...I'M CALLING YOUR *BLUFF.*

NO!

AARRRGGK!

HNNF!

C-COULDN'T SIT THIS ONE OUT, HMM, AGENT VENOM?

NNNN

COME TO *SAVE* YOUR LITTLE FRIEND?

SAVE HER?

SORRY, PAL. YOU'RE AN IDIOT.

I WAS SAVING *YOU* FROM HER!

YOU'RE IN BIG TROUBLE, YOUNG LADY.

I TOLD YOU TO STAY PUT.

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU WERE DOING?

I WAS GETTING THE JOB DONE!

IF I HADN'T STOPPED YOU WHEN I DID...

...YOU WOULD HAVE SET OFF THAT BOMB...

...KILLED GOD KNOWS HOW MANY PEOPLE.

HE WAS BLUFFING!

YOU COULDN'T KNOW THAT!

I KNEW, ALL RIGHT?

A GUY LIKE THAT... HE'S TOO MUCH OF A COWARD TO WALK AROUND WITH A CHEMICAL WEAPON ON HIS CHEST!

AND WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU AREN'T AS SMART AS YOU THINK YOU ARE?

DON'T!

DON'T YOU GO ANYWHERE!

ANOTHER STEP AND I SWEAR I'LL CUT HER LOOSE ON YOU!

LOOK... I'M JUST LOOKING OUT FOR YOU.

YOU'RE NOT YOURSELF... AND IF THE SYMBIOTE WASN'T BAD ENOUGH, I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING MORE...

I DON'T MEAN TO COME DOWN ON YOU--

THEN DON'T.

YOU'RE NOT MY DAD!

I NEVER THOUGHT...

JUST...

JUST FORGET IT, ALL RIGHT?

IT DOESN'T MATTER?

HEAR ME OUT.

THERE'S SOMETHING HAPPENING TO YOU. YOU'VE BEEN *MARKED*... AND I THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE A *DEMON*--

TELL YA WHAT.

WHY DON'T YOU LET ME WORRY ABOUT *DEVIL'S MARKS* AND SUCH?

WHAT ARE *YOU?*

ANOTHER ONE OF OGRE'S FREAKS?

MAYBE THINKING THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO TAKE HIS PLACE?

NAME'S *CROSSBONES.*

YOU AN' ME GOT *BUSINESS,* LITTLE LADY.

ALL RIGHT.

MASTER MAYHEM.

DO YOUR *THING.*

LEAVE THE *MARK* INTACT.

EVERYTHING ELSE IS KIBBLES AND BITS.

OHHHH. DADDY'S RINGING THE DINNER BELL.

HOLD ONTO YOUR BUTTS.

THAT...

...IS ACTUALLY *GOOD* ADVICE.

REEEAARRRRR!

BLAM! BLAM!

SEE? *THIS* IS WHY YOU NEED TO LISTEN TO ME!

CAN YOU SAVE THE LECTURES UNTIL WE'RE NOT BEING--

--EATEN ALIVE?

YEEEAAAAARRRGH!

SHRRK

GRRESHK!

SHHRRRRREEEEEKK!

UH... COACH...

I'M NOT SO SURE OGRE WAS BLUFFING AFTER ALL!

JUST...KEEP FIGHTING!

CLEAR AN ESCAPE ROUTE!

BOCC-BOCC-BOCCP-BOCCCCCCP

I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS!

VsSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

GUY IN THE ROBE... SPITTING *DEMONS* OUT FROM HIS INSIDES.

HOLE IN HIS CHEST... SOME SORT OF *EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL* GATE TO THE UNDER-WORLD MAYBE?

MAYBE.

BUT IT'S THE ONLY *SHOT* I GOT.

ONE MORE *HAIL MARY* FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE.

FIRE IN THE HOLE!

EERP!

DID HE JUST SHOVE A *BOMB* UP YOUR--

URRRGGG.

I...I DON'T NEED THIS...

I COULD'VE GOTTEN STEADY WORK...

I COULD'VE BEEN A *TEACHER.*

ADMIT IT.

THAT WAS KINDA AWESOME.

YEAH... GREAT...

...BUT WE'VE STILL GOT AN ARMY OF DEMONS TO WORRY ABOUT!

SHRRRREEEEK!

GET OFF!

...

T-THEY... THEY *LISTENED* TO ME.

CHANGES THE GAME.

SOMEBODY'S IN TROUBLE.

THE DEVIL'S MARK...GIVES ANDI SOME *CONTROL* OVER DEMONS.

WHAT--

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

HEED YOUR MASTER'S WORDS!

DO AS YOU'RE TOLD!

VRRR-RRT-RRT-RRT-RRT-RRT-RRT-RRRRT

REEEAAAAAK!

SHOULDA KNOWN...

@#$% DEMONS.

AND ME STUCK WITH A TWO-BIT KNOCK-OFF OF WIZARD WHO GETS HIS @$$ HANDED TO HIM ON A REGULAR BASIS.

HOLD ON A SEC.

"WHERE THE HELL DID OUR TARGETS GO?"

Flash Thompson's Apartment.
LATER.
WHAT AM I LOOKING AT, COACH?
I FOUND IT A WHILE AGO. SPOILS OF WAR, I GUESS.
IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH DREDGING UP *MEMORIES.*
I DON'T FULLY *UNDERSTAND* IT, BUT THAT'S NEVER STOPPED ME BEFORE.
I'M GONNA TRY TO USE IT TO *COMMUNICATE* WITH THE SYMBIOTE.
OUR CELLS ARE ALL MIXED TOGETHER...MAYBE OUR MEMORIES ARE, TOO.
AND I NEED YOU TO STAND BY. IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG, YOU USE THE CONTENTS OF THIS SYRINGE TO STOP ME.
THIS IS... LIKE...THE *WORST* PLAN EVER.
PROBABLY. BUT BAD IDEAS ARE MY BREAD AND BUTTER.
THE SYMBIOTE...IT *SHOULDN'T* BE ABLE TO DO THE THINGS IT'S DONE.
WE BOTH NEED TO KNOW IF THERE ARE MORE *SURPRISES* IN STORE.
AND THE MARK?
YOU THINK YOU CAN FIND OUT ABOUT *THAT,* TOO?
THAT'S THE PLAN.
BUT WHO KNOWS?
IT PROBABLY WON'T EVEN--

TOILET

--WORK?

HELLO?

HELLO?

AM I ALONE HERE?

NO. NEVER ALONE.

DO YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M DOING?

YES.

SO MUCH HAS CHANGED. I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CREATED--

THE INTRUDER HAD TO BE PURGED.

YOU TURNED A LITTLE GIRL INTO A--

I SAVED YOU.

I NEVER ASKED.

YOU COULDN'T WALK AND I GAVE YOU LEGS.

YOU WERE TRAPPED AND I SET YOU FREE.

I GAVE YOU STRENGTH WHEN YOU HAD NONE.

THE MARK. THE DEVIL'S MARK--

WAS NEVER YOURS.

THEY WANTED ME, NOT YOU.

I WAS BRANDED.

IT WAS ON MY SOUL.

I CUT THE SICKNESS OUT.

WHAT DID YOU DO?

I PROTECTED YOU!

I'VE ALWAYS PROTECTED YOU!

AND YOU FEARED ME...DRUGGED ME...PRAYED TO GET RID OF ME!

YOU HURT ME!

UNLESS IT SUITED YOU TO USE ME!

AUGH

VENOM WAS STRONG.
VENOM COULD BEAR THE MARK.
BUT IT WAS A TRICK.
A DEMON... ROOTED IN MY SOUL.
THE MARK HOLDS THE DEMON AT BAY...
...BUT ONLY FOR SO LONG.
SEEPING INTO OUR VERY BEING.
BECOMING US IN TIME.
SO WE CUT IT OUT.
EXPEL THE DISEASE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
RRRAAAAAAARRGHH!

NNNNNNGG

W-WAIT.

SMACK!

ARE YOU--

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I DON'T KNOW.

I THINK SO.

BUT I DON'T KNOW.

O-KAY.

DID YOU AT LEAST GET WHATEVER ANSWERS YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

I... MAYBE?

NO. NOT REALLY.

"WE HAVE TO MAKE A DEAL WITH THE DEVIL."

BUT I THINK I KNOW WHAT WE HAVE TO DO NEXT.

VENOM #42
"MANIA CONCLUSION"

Atlantic City,
New Jersey.

THERE'S A JOKE IN HERE SOMEWHERE.

A RUINED CASINO... THE TWO OF US TAKING A *CHANCE* JUST BY WALKING THROUGH THE DOOR.

YEAH, WELL I DON'T FEEL LIKE *LAUGHING*.

THIS BUSINESS WITH THE *DEVIL'S MARK*...THE *DESCENT*... STARTED IN A PLACE NOT TOO DIFFERENT THAN THIS.

ALTHOUGH... THE LAST PLACE WAS IN *BETTER* SHAPE.

AND *THAT* WAS IN THE CENTER OF HELL.

DOESN'T MATTER.

THIS IS WHERE IT *ENDS*.

BY PLAYING THE SLOTS?

THAT'S THE RUMOR.

THIS PLACE... DESERTED AFTER A MOB KILLING...

...THIS COIN...

...ANOINTED IN THE BLOOD OF A MAD PROPHET.

...AND A LITTLE LUCK.

ALL OF IT BAD.

YOUR INFORMANTS... THEY'RE VERY STRANGE PEOPLE.

CH-CHUNK!

WHI-RR-II-RR-II-RR-II-RR-II-RR

DING! DING! D-DING!

OKAY.

NOW WHAT?

AH, MISTER THOMPSON!

YOU SIMPLY CANNOT STAY AWAY FROM *DENS OF INIQUITY*, CAN YOU?

YOUR TRAGIC LITTLE LIFE KEEPS DRAGGING YOU BACK TO *SLEAZE-PITS* LIKE THIS.

YOU'RE *MY* KIND OF LOSER!

JUST STAY RIGHT THERE, *MEPHISTO.*

NOT ANOTHER STEP.

OH, *PLEASE.*

YOU CAME HERE *LOOKING* FOR ME, DIDN'T YOU?

PUT THE WEAPONS AWAY AND LET'S CHAT LIKE *CIVILIZED FOLK.*

YOU'RE THE *DEVIL*, RIGHT?

YOU LIKE STRIKING BARGAINS...OR MAKING BLOOD OATHS...OR SEALING DEALS.

SO HERE'S A *DEAL* FOR YOU.

REMOVE THIS...*BRAND*... YOU'VE PUT ON MY SOUL...

...AND ME AND MY GYM TEACHER HERE WON'T STOMP A MUD HOLE IN YOUR SORRY CARCASS.

UH... YEAH.

WHAT SHE SAID.

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

OH REALLY?

JUST WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DEALING WITH, LITTLE GIRL?

OKAY... EVERYBODY.

STAY COOL, ALL RIGHT?

MEPHISTO... THERE'S A PROBLEM.

WITH THE DEVIL'S MARK.

"YOU BRANDED ME WITH IT BACK WHEN ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE IN VEGAS...

"...AND PICKED ME AS ONE OF YOUR POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS."

AS SEEN IN "CIRCLE OF FOUR" IN VENOM 13-14!
- SYMBIOTIC SANA

"AND THERE'S THE ISSUE...BECAUSE I'M NOT MARKED ANYMORE."

THIS GIRL--

HE CAN CALL ME MANIA.

SHE BEARS THE MARK NOW.

I SEE.

IT WOULD SEEM THAT YOUR OTHERWORLDLY SYMBIOTE HAS SOME *UNEXPECTED TRICKS* UP ITS SLEEVE.

OR SHOULD I SAY...

...IN ITS *FLESH.*

"SOME TIME AGO, IT *ABSORBED* SOMETHING...ITS OWN *CLONE.*

"AND IT WOULD SEEM THAT IT WAS ABLE TO SPIT IT BACK OUT...WITH THE DEVIL'S MARK."

IT *PURGED* THE MARK... BUT IT HAD TO GO *SOMEWHERE...*

...SO IT USED THE CLONE AS A *HOST.*

SO... I'M JUST... *SCRAPS?*

I'M... A...

...COPY?

WHAT DOES THAT EVEN *MEAN?*

AND WHAT ABOUT THE *DEMON* THAT WAS TRAPPED INSIDE ME?

WHERE DID IT GO?

AND HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT MY SYMBIOTE?

I'D LOVE TO MELT YOUR PEA-SIZED BRAIN WITH ANSWERS RIGHT NOW.

I REALLY WOULD.

BUT I'M AFRAID IT WILL HAVE TO *WAIT.*

YOU HAVE COMPANY.

SKRREEEEAAAAAAA!!

SKKKRRRRR!

MANIA! LOOK OUT!

SHHKK!-WHOOM!

ARE YOU--

BRAKKA! BRAKKA!

I'M OKAY. IT'S THOSE GUYS AGAIN, ISN'T IT? THE D.O.A. OR WHATEVER.

BRAKKA! BRAKKA! BRAKKA! BRAKKA! BRAKKA! BRAKKA!

YEAH. AND THIS TIME THEY BROUGHT *REINFORCEMENTS.*

BURN 'EM DOWN! LEAVE JUST ENOUGH SO WE CAN PICK THE DEVIL'S MARK FROM THE GIRL'S BONES!

BRAKKA!

BRAKKA!

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

BRAKKA! BRAKKA! BRAKKA! BRAKKA! BRAKKA!

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF, ANDI.

THE SUIT WILL *PROTECT* YOU FROM MOST OF THE SMALL ARMS FIRE... *HEAL* YOU.

...BUT THAT HEAVY ARTILLERY CAN RIP YOU TO *SHREDS.*

LET'S TAKE THESE GUYS DOWN *BEFORE* THAT HAPPENS.

BRAKKA! BRAKKA!

BLAM!

AND WHERE THE HELL DID MEPHISTO--

AGH!

YEEEAAGGGH!

STALKED BY *FREAKS*...

...WITH *ASSAULT RIFLES*...

...AND THEY WANT TO *SKIN* ME...

VIP! VIP! V-VIP!

THIS IS WHY I TRY TO STAY THE HELL OUT OF ATLANTIC CITY!

KRNK!

KRAK!

SNAP!

RRRUMMBLEE

SHRR-RAK!

SHRAK! RR-RAK!

GET BACK UP!

ARE YOU GONNA LET A LITTLE GIRL WHOOP YOUR ASSES?

WHY NOT?

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

I'M GIVING YOU YOUR SHOT.

WOOF!

AS A KID, I WANTED TO BE AN *ALL-STAR*.

I WANTED THE FANS, THE RING, AND THE STRING OF ATHLETIC SHOE AND BREAKFAST FOOD ENDORSEMENTS.

AS I GOT OLDER, I DREAMED OF FOLLOWING IN MY IDOL'S FOOTSTEPS...

...BECOMING AN HONEST-TO-GOODNESS *SUPER HERO*...

...EVEN THOUGH I'VE NEVER REALLY *UNDERSTOOD* WHAT THAT MEANT.

AND IF I COULDN'T BE A SUPER HERO, I JUST WANTED TO SERVE MY COUNTRY.

THE ONE THING I *NEVER* WANTED TO BE, THOUGH, WAS A *FATHER*.

MY OLD MAN CURED ME OF ANY *PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS* EARLY ON.

SLSSCH

WHEN HE GOT SO DRUNK HE PUKED ALL OVER MY COMIC BOOKS...

...WHEN HE WENT CATTING AROUND 'TIL ALL HOURS OF THE NIGHT...

RRRRGGGHHH

...WHEN HE *HIT* ME...

...I KNEW IT WAS *WRONG*...I KNEW THAT WASN'T HOW A *DAD* WAS SUPPOSED TO ACT...

...AND I KNEW I *NEVER* WANTED TO *RISK* BECOMING *ANYTHING* LIKE HIM.

FWAKK

CRRNNK

NNNGGH

BACK-STABBING SONOVA--

ANDI TOLD ME I SHOULD STOP TRYING TO ACT LIKE HER FATHER.

AND SHE'S *RIGHT.*

CROSSBONES.

HER FATHER DIED... BECAUSE OF *ME*...ON THE SAME NIGHT SHE BECAME *MANIA*...

...*ALSO* BECAUSE OF *ME.*

DON'T GO ANYWHERE.

SO WHILE SHE MAY NOT BE MY KID, SHE'S SURE AS HELL MY *RESPONSIBILITY.*

WE AREN'T DONE WITH YOU YET!

AND ANYONE WHO TRIES TO DO HER HARM WILL HAVE TO GET THROUGH ME.

ALL THOSE DREAMS OF MINE...ALL THOSE ASPIRATIONS...

SLASH!!

...EACH AND EVERY ONE OF 'EM CRASHED DOWN AROUND ME THANKS TO THE OL' THOMPSON LUCK.

AND WHEN THE DREAMS DIDN'T COME TRUE, I JUST WANTED TO FORGET.

SO I *DRANK.*

SMASH!!

BUT NOT ANYMORE...BECAUSE I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO *REMIND* ME...

SKKRREEEEEAAAK

...A *RESPONSIBILITY* I CAN'T TURN MY BACK ON...

...AND THAT MEANS *FIGHTING*...

...'TIL YOUR KNUCKLES ARE RAW AND THE ONLY THING YOU CAN TASTE IS YOUR OWN SWEAT AND BLOOD...

DON'T JUST STAND THERE, YA SORRY SACK!

YER SUPPOSED TO BE OUR MAGICAL BACKUP!

I DON'T HEAR SOME ABRACADABRAS COMING OUTTA YER PIE HOLE--

--AND I MEAN RIGHT THIS @#$%$## SECOND--

--I'M GONNA *FEED* YOU TO THOSE THINGS.

B-BUT...MY *DEMONS*...

THEY... THEY *TURNED* ON ME.

TRAGIC, ISN'T IT?

WHEN YOUR UNDERLINGS *BETRAY* YOU.

WHU--

MEPHISTO!

MY...MY LORD.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

IF I HAD KNOWN...I WOULD HAVE BROUGHT AN *OFFERING.*

PLEASE, *SPARE ME* YOUR *PLATITUDES.*

YOU'RE ONE OF THE *ENTROPY CELL*, AREN'T YOU? PANDEMONIUM'S *DISCIPLE, MASTER MAYHEM..*

SUCH A GRAND EXPERIMENT, YOU AND YOUR KIND.

AND THAT'S WHY IT IS SO *DISAPPOINTING* TO SEE YOU MUCKING AROUND WITH MY PLANS.

TRYING TO HARVEST DEVIL'S MARKS FROM *MY* CHOSEN.

→TSK←

BAD BOY.

NNNRRRREAAAAGGGH!

ALTHOUGH YOU'LL STILL PROVE *USEFUL* TO ME.

KR-KRAK-SNAP!

RISE...

...MONSTERS OF EVIL!

WE... WE KNOW THEM.

HELLSTROM CREATED THEM...DEMONS POSSESSING MONSTERS.

WARNED THEM NEVER TO SHOW THEMSELVES AGAIN.

OF COURSE YOU DID.

ONLY, THE POWER THAT GAVE YOU *INFLUENCE* OVER THEM IS *GONE.*

THEY NEED NOT HEED YOUR WORDS.

NOW...

...THEY ARE *MANIA'S* TO COMMAND.

GRRAAAHHH!

M-MINE?

ALL RIGHT THEN.

TEAR 'EM APART!

SHHRRRRRKK!

ARE YOU DONE?

DO YOU SURRENDER?

OR DOES THIS GET MESSIER?

THE PEOPLE I WORK WITH...

...THEY WON'T EVER BE DONE...

...NOT UNTIL THEY'VE GOT WHAT THEY WANT.

NEXT TIME, IT'LL BE--

YOU BETTER RUN!

STOP DOING THAT.

THOSE NAZI GUYS...THE DEMONS...THE MONSTERS.

ALL OF THEM.

THEY'RE GONE.

YOU HAVE ME TO THANK FOR THAT.

I SENT THE MONSTERS OF EVIL HOME.

AND THE OTHERS... WELL...

...CONSIDER THEM A SNACK FOR THE TRIP.

ALL RIGHT.

LET'S GET DOWN TO BRASS TACKS.

RELEASE HER. LET ANDI GO.

ERASE THE MARK... WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO DO...

BUT DO IT-- NOW.

AND IF I SAY NO?

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

THAT WASN'T SMART, FLASH, DEAR BOY.

SUCH AN INSULT...I SHOULD FILET YOU WHERE YOU STAND.

BUT IT WOULD SEEM THAT WE HAVE MUTUAL ENEMIES...AND THEY HAVE DESIGNS ON DEAR MANIA HERE.

SHE NEEDS YOU... AND SO, TOO, DO I.

I SPARE YOU ONLY SO YOU CAN CONTINUE TO ACT AS HER GUARDIAN.

WAIT. HOLD ON.

WHAT ABOUT THE DEMON VENOM MENTIONED? THE ONE THAT WAS TRAPPED INSIDE HIM?

IS IT IN ME NOW?

AND HOW CAN I BE MARKED IF I NEVER MADE ANY DEAL WITH YOU?

SO MANY QUESTIONS.

BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY BLEEDING HEART ON MY SCHEDULE.

I'LL LEAVE YOU WITH THIS, THOUGH.

MY ORIGINAL BARGAIN...THE ONE THAT MARKED VENOM...WAS NOT WITH FLASH.

IT WAS WITH THE SYMBIOTE.

ARE... ARE YOU OKAY?

I... I DON'T KNOW.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT... HOW...I'M *SUPPOSED* TO FEEL.

HEY...WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS.

WE'VE GOT *RESOURCES*. I HAVE *FRIENDS* WHO CAN HELP US.

I'M NOT GONNA STOP UNTIL I FIND A WAY TO REMOVE THAT MARK.

I SWEAR--

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO *FIGHT*.

UNTIL YOUR KNUCKLES ARE RAW.

BUT SOMETIMES IT'S JUST AS IMPORTANT TO LET YOUR GUARD DOWN.

AND JUST *BE THERE*.

AN ALL-STAR, A HERO, A SOLDIER.

ALL THE THINGS I DREAMED OF BEING.

AND STILL *SURPRISED*... EVEN AT THE END...WITH HOW MY LIFE TURNED OUT.

Months after the events of *Venom #42*, Flash Thompson's life changed in a major way when Tony Stark asked him to become the Avengers' representative to the spacefaring Guardians of the Galaxy.

However, after several cosmic adventures in outer space, Flash's symbiote eventually lost control of itself and attacked the Guardians, using their ship to travel to its homeworld of Klyntar. There, the other members of its race were able to purify Flash's symbiote, cleansing it of the irrational impulses that had plagued it.

Now Flash and the symbiote have re-bonded, and have answered the Klyntar call to serve as a galactic peacekeeping agent. Known as an Agent of the Cosmos, Flash is swashbuckling his way across the universe as...

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #1

SO, THAT COULD HAVE GONE BETTER.

BUT, HEY...

...PLAYBOOK THROWN OUT THE WINDOW?

I'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE.

BROKEN PLAYS.

ALWAYS MY FAVORITE.

JUST RUN.

LIKE A KID ON A PLAYGROUND.

AN ALIEN PLAYGROUND ON A PLANET WITH A NAME I CAN'T PRONOUNCE.

BUT STILL.

ACT ON INSTINCT.

AND IF YOU TIME IT JUST RIGHT...

TOUCHDOWN.

THANKS FOR BREAKING MY FALL, GHOLAR.

<...MY PANCREAS...>*

*TRANSLATED FROM THE YPPPLK'O LANGUAGE.

CROWD GOES WILD!

OR NOT.

MY NAME IS FLASH THOMPSON.

AND I AM AN AGENT OF THE COSMOS.

YEAH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT AGENT OF THE COSMOS MEANS, EITHER.

ALL I KNOW IS: I GOT A MESSAGE TO COME TO THIS PLANET AND TRACK DOWN A CHEMICAL WEAPON.

AND WHEN I SAY MESSAGE, I MEAN I HEARD WORDS *RINGING* IN MY HEAD.

IT'S WEIRD.

BUT THAT'S MY LIFE NOW.

WEIRD.

WHICH, SO FAR? KINDA WORKING FOR ME.

MY LANDING PAD, GHOLAR, SOLD A SHIPMENT OF YT-19 TO A SMUGGLER. NASTY STUFF, I HEAR.

THE BUYER'S IDENTITY IS ON THE DRIVE THAT I JUST BORROWED. GOTTA GET TO MY SHIP TO READ IT--

TICK-TICK-TICK

KA-BOOM

YOU KNOW WHAT?

NEVER LIKED THAT SHIP ANYWAY.

<...DON'T THINK OF IT AS A TIMESHARE, THINK OF IT AS A FUN-SHARE...>*

*TRANSLATED FROM THE FH'JLIJ^9YHO LANGUAGE.

SMASH!

MIND IF I BORROW YOUR COMPUTER?

<WHAT IN BLAIT'R'S NAME?!>

<I SHOULD HAVE STUDIED ACCOUNTING LIKE MY SISTER TOLD ME TO.>

I PLUG IN THE DRIVE AND GET GOOD NEWS WITH A SIDE OF BAD NEWS:

GOOD NEWS? I KNOW WHO GHOLAR SOLD THE YT-19 TO: A PIRATE NAMED KIO.

BAD NEWS? KIO'S SHIP IS SCHEDULED TO DEPART FIVE MINUTES FROM NOW.

THANKS FOR YOUR TIME, MA'AM. SORRY ABOUT THE MESS.

<CALL ME?>

BLASTING OFF INTO SPACE ON THE SIDE OF A SHIP IS PROBABLY NOT MY BEST IDEA OF THE DAY.

BUT AT LEAST IT'LL GET ME AWAY FROM THESE THUGS.

AND IT'S A HELLUVA VIEW.

GOTTA BE AN AIRLOCK DOOR AROUND HERE...

JUST GOTTA WIGGLE MY WAY IN AND...

CLUNK!

YAHTZEE.

OKAY, FIRST THINGS FIRST. FIND THE YT-19.

AND THEN: PUNCHING.

A WHOLE LOT OF PUNCHING.

THEN, STEAL THIS SHIP SINCE THEY BLEW UP MY--

WAIT.

MIGHT HAVE TO SKIP TO THE PUNCHING.

TURN AROUND.

NICE, SLOW AND *QUIET*, MR. ROBOTO.

CAN I HELP YOU?

YES... DESTROY ME. END THIS MISERY.

UH... WHAT?

I HAVE BEEN BOUND IN SERVITUDE TO THE PIRATE KIO FOR CENTURIES. MY PROGRAMMING DOES NOT ALLOW ME TO SELF-DESTRUCT.

DESTROY ME, DEACTIVATE ME, SEND ME OUT THE AIRLOCK--

TIME OUT. WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

803.

NICE TO MEET YOU, 803. HOW ABOUT YOU SHOW ME WHERE THE YT-19 IS BEING STORED, AND IN RETURN--

YOU'LL DESTROY ME?

TAKE ME TO THE YT-19 AND WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS. I DON'T WANT TO SPOIL IT FOR YOU.

SECTOR 15

WHIRRR

I TOLD YOU TO TAKE ME TO THE YT-19. WHO THE HELL ARE THESE--

SIR, THE YT-19...

...COMES FROM THEIR BLOOD.

THE SUIT I'M WEARING--THE KLYNTAR--IT WAS PURGED OF ALL OF ITS ANGER. ITS RAGE.

BUT I WASN'T.

STAY AWAY. IF YOU LAY A HAND ON MY CHILDREN--

THE RAGE IS *BURNING* INSIDE ME. BUILDING. THE KLYNTAR CAN FEEL IT, IT'S FEEDING ON--

NO. C'MON, FLASH. BREATHE. USE YOUR WORDS.

UH. HI. MY NAME IS VENOM. I'M AN AGENT OF THE COSMOS.

THANK THE GODS.

WAIT. DO YOU KNOW WHAT AN AGENT OF THE COSMOS IS? 'CAUSE I'VE BEEN WONDERING--

THAT *THING* IS WITH THE PIRATES.

803? NAH. HE'S TEAM US, NOW. TOTALLY HARMLESS: ALL IT WANTS IS TO BE DESTROYED. RIGHT, 803?

IT'S TRUE. PLEASE DESTROY--

IN A BIT, PAL, BUT FIRST, FIND HER A GUN AND MAKE SURE NOTHING HAPPENS TO THEM UNTIL I GET BACK. COPY?

YES. AND THEN... DESTRUCTION?

ONLY IF YOU'RE GOOD.

EVASIVE MANEUVERS.

TURN US INTO THE BROKEN SEA.

BUT KIO, SIR, THE WERE-FISH WILL TEAR US APART--

WE HAVE AN INTRUDER ABOARD. WE CAN USE HIS CORPSE TO DISTRACT THEM.

WHAT INTRUDER?

THAT'D BE ME.

WHAM!

NOW WHAT DOES A *KLYNTAR* WANT FROM A SIMPLE PIRATE LIKE ME?

YOUR CARGO. IT'S COMING WITH ME.

AH... NOT JUST *ANY* KLYNTAR, THEN.

AN AGENT OF THE COSMOS.

THAT'S RIGHT.

ANY IDEA WHAT AN AGENT OF THE COSMOS ACTUALLY DOES? I MEAN, OTHER THAN--

AGENTS OF THE COSMOS ARE NOTHING.

THEY'RE *WEAK.*

POW!

SONIC... BLAST... NOT GOOD FOR ME...

WORSE FOR THE KLYNTAR...

SKREEE!

AND AN EARTHLING HOST? EVEN *WEAKER.*

SYMBIOTE'S ON THE FLOOR.

AND I'M ABOUT TO JOIN IT...

I'M GOING TO SELL YOUR KLYNTAR FOR A PRETTY PENNY.

AND YOU'LL MAKE NICE SCRAPS FOR THE WERE-FISH.

ANOTHER BROKEN PLAY.

BUT THAT'S OKAY...

BROKEN PLAYS ARE KINDA MY THING.

NOW I JUST HOPE MY PARTNER FEELS THE SAME WAY...

I CALL THIS LITTLE TRINKET "THE SCREAM."

DO YOU LIKE IT?

LOVE IT.

BUT YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT SPACE AND SCREAMS.

EEEE EEEE EEEE EEEE

CHHOOK!

C'MON, SYMBIOTE. ACT ON INSTINCT. AND IF WE TIME IT JUST RIGHT...

TOUCHDOWN.

PLANET UUEX.

MY WIFE AND I ARE FOREVER IN YOUR DEBT, AGENT VENOM.

WILL YOU BE SAFE HERE?

YES. WE WERE TAKEN IN TRANSIT.

NO ONE HAS ATTEMPTED TO HARVEST MY PEOPLE'S BLOOD IN MILLIONS OF CYCLES.

SO WHY NOW?

A DARKNESS HAS BEEN BREWING OUT HERE IN THE OUTER RIM.

I FEAR FOR THE FUTURE.

BUT IT GIVES ME HOPE TO KNOW THE AGENTS OF THE COSMOS STILL WATCH OVER US ALL.

YEAH, WHAT EXACTLY *ARE* AGENTS OF THE COSMOS?

HEROES, OF COURSE.

HEROES, HUH? I CAN WORK WITH THAT.

YOU SHOULD HAVE LEFT ME IN SPACE.

LOOK, YOU'RE A FREE 'BOT, 803. YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT NOW.

THAT... DOES NOT COMPUTE.

YEAH, WELL, FREEDOM CAN TAKE A WHILE.

YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY, 803. BUT I'M IN CHARGE NOW, SO YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO HELP OUT. WHICH MEANS NO DESTRUCTION.

FOR NOW.

WELL, I CAN SPEAK THREE MILLION LANGUAGES, AND I'M FLUENT IN 217 FORMS OF **TORTURE**--

ALL RIGHT, LET'S KICK OFF OUR NATIVE VOYAGE TOGETHER WITH A LITTLE ***QUIET*** TIME.

I GOT A NEW SHIP. A ROBOT WITH A DEATH WISH.

AND I'M A ***HERO.***

ALL IN? NOT BAD FOR A SERIES OF BROKEN PLAYS.

MAYBE THIS WHOLE AGENT OF THE COSMOS THING, WHATEVER IT IS, IS GOING TO WORK OUT JUST FINE...

OR NOT.

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #2

MY NAME IS FLASH.

AND I'M AN *ALCOHOLIC.*

HI, FLASH!

HI, FLASH!

HI, FLASH!

BEEN A WHILE SINCE MY LAST MEETING.

WITH MY JOB, IT'S BEEN HARD TO GET TO ONE. BUT... NO EXCUSES, RIGHT?

I HAVE *TWO* JOBS, ACTUALLY. THINGS ARE FINALLY STARTING TO CLICK AT MY MAIN JOB. GREAT COWORKERS.

"SOME ARE A BIT CRAZY, BUT I GUESS THAT'S LIKE ANY JOB, RIGHT?

"AS FOR MY *NEW* JOB... WELL..."

"...IT'S COMPLICATED."

63 HOURS, FIFTEEN MINUTES, THREE SECONDS AGO...

I'M PICKING UP READINGS THREE SYSTEMS FROM HERE, PERHAPS IT'S TIME TO--

KINDA BUSY RIGHT NOW, 803.

MEANTIME?

IF YOU SPOT THE SHIP THAT'S BEEN FOLLOWING US, GREAT.

K-KRAKKK!

AAAIIEEE!

I AM STILL UNCERTAIN AS TO WHY WE CAME TO THIS **WRECK** OF A PLANET WHILE ON THE RUN FROM WHAT IS CLEARLY A WAR SHIP.

I HEARD A CRY FOR HELP.

IN MY HEAD.

AGAIN.

<OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED!>*

YEAH, ABOUT THAT--

<OH, NO-- THE HEAT RAIN!>

<WE'RE TOO FAR FROM OUR VILLAGE.>

<IT *BURNS!*>

I GOT YOU COVERED.

YOUR VILLAGE-- WHERE IS IT?

<DOWN RIVER.>

*TRANSLATED FROM THE NATIVE P'QUI BY THE KLYNTAR!

ALL RIGHT, HANG ON, THIS MIGHT BE A LITTLE *WEIRD.*

SORRY, I WAS WRONG.

THIS IS *VERY* WEIRD.

SO, YOU CALLED OUT FOR HELP. TO *WHOM?*

<HJUO, OF COURSE.>

AND WHO'S HE?

<*SHE*. SHE'S OUR HIGHER POWER.>

YOU PRAYED. AND THAT'S IT? NOTHING ELSE? NO 911 CALL?

<WHAT IS 911?>

NOTHING. SORRY. WHAT WAS THE DEAL WITH THE CRAB CREATURES BACK THERE?

<THE FMORA? THEY ARE USUALLY DOCILE, BUT THE DRILL DROVE THEM FROM THEIR HOMES, TOOK AWAY THEIR FOOD.>

WHAT *DRILL?*

<PRAISE HJUO! THE RAIN HAS STOPPED!>

<WE CAN TAKE YOU TO THE DRILL NOW.>

<IT FELL FROM THE SKY MONTHS AGO.>

<IT LANDED IN THIS VALLEY, AND BURROWED INTO THE GROUND. CUTTING THE FMORA OFF FROM THEIR FOOD SUPPLY.

<IT HAS UPSET THE BALANCE ON OUR PLANET.>

<IT IS *EVIL.*>

AND NOBODY'S BEEN WORKING ON IT?

<NO. IT WORKS ON ITS OWN. AND THOSE GREEN CANISTERS FLY INTO THE SKY WHEN THEY ARE FILLED WITH THE FMORA'S FOOD.>

<WHY IS IT HERE?>

I DON'T KNOW. BUT IT'S GOING AWAY. *NOW.*

803... TARGET THE VALLEY BELOW MY LOCATION, COPY? SCAN THE TECH AND THEN--

KA BOOM!

THOSE CRAB CAKES WILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS THEIR FOOD AGAIN IN A FEW DAYS. THAT SHOULD KEEP THEM AWAY FROM YOU.

<BLESS YOU, HJUO!>

<HAIL, HJOU! PRAISE HJOU!>

NO, I'M NOT...SEE? I'M JUST A HUMAN.

=SIGH=

ARE YOU A GOD NOW, SIR?

GET US OUT OF HERE.

RIGHT AWAY.

OH...

WE MAY BE TRAPPED...

KILL THE ENGINES.

A WISE DECISION, SIR--LET THEM OBLITERATE US. THERE'S NO SHAME IN QUICK DEATH.

SORRY TO DISAPPOINT, 803. BUT THEY'RE NOT GONNA KILL US.

IF THEY WANTED US DEAD, WE'D HAVE BEEN DESTROYED DAYS AGO.

THEY *LET* US GET AWAY. BEEN FOLLOWING US EVER SINCE.

AND NOW THEY'RE USING SOME KIND OF TRACTOR BEAM--

PERFECT.

WELCOME TO THE DEATH STAR.

IS THAT THE NAME OF THIS VESSEL?

I WISH.

STAY HERE, 803. YOU GET THE CHANCE, RUN.

I KNOW YOU'RE WATCHING...

...LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH ALREADY.

CONTAINER H-22

A.A.E

GGGHHRAAAGHH!

BACK 'ATCHA, SUNSHINE.

SO, WE'RE BOTH WEARING KLYNTARS. ANY CHANCE WE CAN WORK THIS OUT LIKE CIVILIZED SYMBIOTES, OR--

GGGHHRAAAAGHH!

YEAH, I KNOW, YOU SAID THAT BEFORE--

GAH!

ANY CHANCE YOU'RE A BASEBALL FAN?

GUESS NOT.

YOU KNOW KLYNTAR ARE S'POSED TO BE PEACEFUL, RIGHT?

I'M GUESSING YOU'RE ONE NASTY PIECE OF WORK UNDER ALL THAT PURPLE.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA.

I'M STARTIN' TO GET THE PICTURE.

ENOUGH.

I AM MYNTRIL.

AND THIS IS TARNA.

WE ARE AGENTS OF THE COSMOS, VENOM.

LIKE *YOU.*

HIM? ONE OF US? *NO.*

TARNA.

HE'S *WEAK.* BARELY IN SYNC WITH HIS KLYNTAR.

WE'VE BEEN GETTING ALONG GREAT SINCE YOU GUYS CLEANSED US.

ONLY PROBLEM I SEEM TO HAVE IS BEING CHASED AROUND BY YOU GUYS.

AND, Y'KNOW... HEARING VOICES IN MY HEAD.

THOSE AREN'T VOICES, VENOM.

THAT'S THE *COSMOS.*

AGENTS ARE TIED TO THE COSMOS *ITSELF*. WHEN WE HEAR VOICES CRY OUT...

...WE *ANSWER*.

THAT'S THE JOB? HELP WHEN HELP IS NEEDED? MAKE THE UNIVERSE A BETTER PLACE ONE PLANET AT A TIME?

IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING.

SOUNDS LIKE FUN.

YOU HAVE A STRANGE SENSE OF FUN, HUMAN.

I BET YOU SAY THAT TO ALL THE HUMANS. SO WHY WERE YOU GUYS CHASING ME?

WE HAVE BEEN TESTING YOU.

TO SEE IF YOU ARE *WORTHY*.

TO SEE IF YOU ARE *READY*.

AND?

YOU HAVE DONE VERY WELL.

ADEQUATE. AT BEST.

YOU AND I ARE GONNA BE BEST FRIENDS, AREN'T WE?

YOU ARE A WASTE OF TIME.

SHE MUST BE REALLY POPULAR BACK HOME.

TARNA IS FEARED BY ALL WHO HAVE MET HER.

I'M GUESSING SARCASM ISN'T BIG WHERE YOU'RE FROM.

THE PLANET I WAS JUST ON... IT WAS BEING TAPPED FOR FUEL BY SOME INTENSE TECH. ANY IDEA WHO IT BELONGS TO?

WHOEVER THEY ARE... THEY ARE NOT SANCTIONED BY ANY EMPIRE WE ARE AWARE OF, VENOM.

SOMEONE'S GONE ROGUE?

WE BELIEVE THIS ROGUE YOU SPEAK OF IS THE SAME ONE WHO TRIED TO GET THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS YOU INTERCEPTED.

THIS IS ALL CONNECTED?

YES. WE NEED YOU TO FIND OUT WHO IS BEHIND THIS. AND WHY.

SO THERE'S A ROGUE TERRORIST IN THE GALAXY THAT'S ARMING UP.

GOOD TIMES.

TARNA IS CORRECT.

YOU DO HAVE A STRANGE SENSE OF FUN.

TARNA IS IN CHARGE OF YOUR TRAINING. IF YOU NEED HER, SIMPLY CALL OUT.

SHE WILL MOST LIKELY NEVER ANSWER.

CLASSY.

GOODBYE, VENOM. REMEMBER:

THE COSMOS IS ALWAYS WITH YOU.

"AS FOR MY *NEW* JOB... WELL...

"...IT'S *COMPLICATED.*"

BUT IT ALSO FEELS LIKE A SECOND CHANCE. NOT JUST FOR ME... BUT ALSO FOR... FOR EVERYONE IN MY LIFE.

AND THAT...

...FEELS PRETTY DAMN GREAT.

AND FINDING YOU ALL, AND THIS MEETING. WELL... I KNOW I'M A LONG WAY FROM IT, BUT IT FEELS LIKE *HOME.*

THANKS FOR LISTENING.

NOW.

ANY CHANCE THAT BLACK LIQUID IS COFFEE?

OUR DRILL IN THE OUTER RIM HAS BEEN *DESTROYED.*

LIFE ON THAT PLANET COULD NOT HAVE OVERCOME THE DRILL'S AUTOMATED DEFENSES.

THAT'S CORRECT.

THEN WHO *DID* THIS TO US?

WE BELIEVE IT'S THE INTERLOPER WE ENCOUNTERED BEFORE. CALLS ITSELF VENOM.

A HUMAN.

WRAPPED IN A KLYNTAR.

WE HAVE A LOCK ON HIS SHIP.

WHAT ARE YOUR ORDERS, LORD MERCURIO?

I AM NO LORD, TUBIN.

NOT UNTIL WE HAVE TAKEN BACK OUR PLANET.

AS FOR ORDERS...

WHO IS THE WORST, MOST VILE CREATURE IN OUR HOLDING CELLS?

PIK ROLLO.

PLACE HER ON OUR FASTEST SHIP.

AND COMMAND HER TO BRING ME THE HEAD OF THIS SO-CALLED *VENOM*.

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #3

PLANET GORFIN-7

SEE? IT'S NOT ALL PUNCHING AND KICKING.

SOMETIMES WE BUILD BRIDGES. LITERALLY.

WHICH IS STRANGELY MORE TIRING.

LET'S SET A COURSE FOR THIS PLANET ROCKET WAS TELLING ME ABOUT. I CAN'T PRONOUNCE ITS NAME BUT IT'S LIKE AN ENTIRE PLANET OF BORA BORA.

THIS GRUNT COULD USE SOME R AND--

GAH.

GREAT. MORE VOICES IN MY HEAD.

CHANGE OF PLANS.

WE GOT SOMEONE ELSE THAT NEEDS OUR HELP.

HOPEFULLY IT'S SOMETHING EASY. LIKE, A PLANET OF PEOPLE WHO NEED HIGH FIVES--

"--OR A GIANT PLANET OF LAVA AND FIRE.

"THAT'LL WORK, TOO."

THE KLYNTAR ARE VULNERABLE TO FIRE, ARE THEY NOT, SIR?

YOU'RE NOT WRONG, 803.

SORRY, BIG GUY, GONNA HAVE TO GO SOLO ON THIS ONE.

ANY CHANCE THERE ARE MECH-SUITS ON THIS HUNK OF JUNK?

THERE ARE SOME RUMBLE SUITS THAT MIGHT WORK.

ALL RIGHT. LET'S GET READY TO RUMBLE.

THIS SHOULD COME IN HANDY--

ACTUALLY, SIR, DUE TO THIS PLANET'S HIGHLY VOLATILE ATMOSPHERE, YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO USE ANY FIREARMS, OR ANY OF THE SUIT'S BLASTERS.

I CAN'T GO DOWN THERE WITH JUST CHARM.

WELL, THERE IS THIS CRUDE WEAPON.

OPEN THE POD BAY DOORS, HAL.

THOOOOM!

AM I READING THIS RIGHT?

I'VE ONLY GOT FORTY-FIVE MINUTES UNTIL THIS SUIT MELTS?

NO, SIR.

YOU'VE ONLY GOT THIRTY MINUTES.

OH, THAT'S GOOD, ACTUALLY. I HAVE A THING IN FORTY-FIVE MINUTES.

BASED ON MY ANALYSIS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERIC VOLATILITY IS **NEW**, MEANING--

HANG ON A SEC, 803, I'M ABOUT TO BE AMBUSHED.

F?NRK!

ANY CHANCE THIS SUIT HAS TRANSLATION SOFTWARE?

YES, ACTIVATING REMOTELY.

ΠPFBXCRB? XBIJΠFF...

...AND YOU WILL BOW BEFORE ME, IQA, QUEEN OF THE WUGIN!

SORRY, I MISSED THE FIRST PART. LET'S START OVER. MY NAME IS FLASH THOMPSON. NICE TO MEET YOU, IQA.

YOU SPEAK *OUR* WORDS, FLESH TOM-SEN. PERHAPS YOU ARE NOT AS STUPID AS YOU APPEAR.

PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS TELLING ME THAT.

LISTEN, I'M HERE TO HELP. OR I'M HERE TO STOP YOU FROM DOING SOMETHING BAD.

ANY CHANCE YOU CAN TELL ME WHICH--

YOU ARE ONE OF THE *USURPERS*. YOU HAVE DESTROYED MY PLANET, AND NOW YOU SHALL PAY!

AH, OKAY, COOL. I'M HERE TO *HELP*.

I'M *NOT* WITH THE USURPERS. IN FACT, I'D LIKE TO PUT A STOP TO ALL THE USURPING.

SEE? I COME IN PEACE. SORT OF.

TAKE ME TO THE USURPERS AND I'LL SHOW YOU WHOSE SIDE I'M ON.

I SHALL TAKE YOU THERE, FLESH TOM-SEN. BUT ANY FALSE MOVEMENTS AND I WILL EAT YOUR SKULL.

FAIR ENOUGH.

THREE CYCLES AGO, A COMET ENTERED OUR ATMOSPHERE AND LANDED IN THE GREAT EYE.

THE VOLCANO?

THE GREAT EYE.

ANY CHANCE YOU'RE A TOLKIEN FAN?

I KNOW OF NO TOL-KEEN. IS TOL-KEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREAT EYE OPENING?

PROBABLY NOT.

SO, LET ME GUESS, THE COMET WASN'T A COMET, IT WAS A PIECE OF TECHNOLOGY AND IT CAUSED THE VOLCANO--ER-- THE GREAT EYE TO ERUPT.

I AM IMPRESSED. THE MEN OF MY PEOPLE ARE SLOW AND ONLY USED FOR BREEDING. BUT YOU APPEAR TO HAVE SENSE AND SKILL ABOUT YOU.

THAT IS WHAT I PUT ON MY TINDER PROFILE.

SO WHAT'S WITH THE ROCK DUDES WITH THE HOT HEADS THAT YOUR FRIENDS ARE FIGHTING?

"FRIENDS? NO. THOSE ARE MY WARRIORS.

"AND THEY ARE BATTLING THE UNDERDWELLERS. UNDERDWELLERS LIVE INSIDE THE GREAT EYE.

"THE UNDERDWELLERS ACT AS ONE. AND THEY ONLY KNOW TO PROTECT THE GREAT EYE.

"THEY BELIEVE WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DESTROY THEIR HOME, BUT WE WISH ONLY TO HELP.

"WE NEED TO REMOVE THIS 'TEK-NO-LO-GEE' BEFORE OUR PLANET IS DESTROYED."

IF YOU CAN GET ME THROUGH THAT MESS DOWN THERE, I'LL JUMP INTO THE GREAT EYE AND GET THIS ALL SORTED OUT.

AH. THERE'S THE MALE STUPIDITY I KNOW.

I TRY.

ENOUGH TALKING, FLESH TOM-SEN...

...LET US BATTLE!

WATCH MY SIX, IQA. I'M HEADING FOR THE LAVA.

SIR, I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE YOUR SUIT CAN HANDLE--

DON'T WORRY, I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME ANYWAY. IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, IT'D MELT ON ITS OWN SOON ENOUGH.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT, SIR.

GONNA BE RADIO SILENT FROM HERE, 803.

COPY THAT, SIR. IN THE EVENT OF YOUR INEVITABLE DEMISE, MAY I HAVE YOUR PERMISSION TO FLY THE SHIP INTO THE NEAREST STAR?

NO.

YOU HAVE MY PERMISSION TO LIVE FOREVER AND SPEND YOUR DAYS WRITING EPIC SONGS ABOUT ME.

BUT SIR, I PLAY NO MUSICAL--

SPLASH!

WHHHHNNK!

YOU HAVE SUCCEEDED, FLESH. OUR ATMOSPHERE HAS BEEN RESTORED.

THAT'S GOOD. 'CAUSE I'M OUT OF OXYGEN AND MY SUIT IS WRECKED.

THE GREAT TOL-KEEN HAS BEEN DESTROYED! I AM IN YOUR DEBT.

AH, IT WAS NOTHING. I ALWAYS WANTED TO JUMP INTO A BURNING POOL OF LAVA AND--

YOU ARE WELCOME TO A PLACE IN MY HUSBAND STABLE.

RAIN CHECK?

I KISSED AN ALIEN.

DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT WAS ON MY BUCKET LIST.

TECHNICALLY, DON'T YOU KISS AN ALIEN WHEN WEARING THE--

DON'T RUIN THIS FOR ME, 803.

AND HEY, YOUR CALCULATIONS WERE WRONG. THE RUMBLE SUIT--

KKKK-KKKKK-

CRASH!

YOU WERE SAYING, SIR?

UM, NOTHING.

I HAVE SOMETHING WAITING FOR YOU IN THE MED BAY WHEN YOU ARE FREE.

I HOPE IT'S A NAP.

ALL RIGHT, 803...

WHAT DO YOU SAY WE SET COURSE FOR PLANET BORA BORA?

ALREADY PLOTTED A COURSE, SIR.

"GOOD. TIME TO LEAVE OUR TROUBLES BEHIND."

FWOOOSH!

"THE KLYNTAR AND ITS HOST HAVE LEFT THE PLANET, SIR."

AND I ASSUME THE SEED WE PLANTED THERE HAS BEEN DESTROYED.

YES. SHALL WE REPLACE--

NO. PURSUE THE AGENT OF THE COSMOS.

ACCORDING TO OUR READINGS, HE'S HEADED FOR THE PLANET XFFGATH.

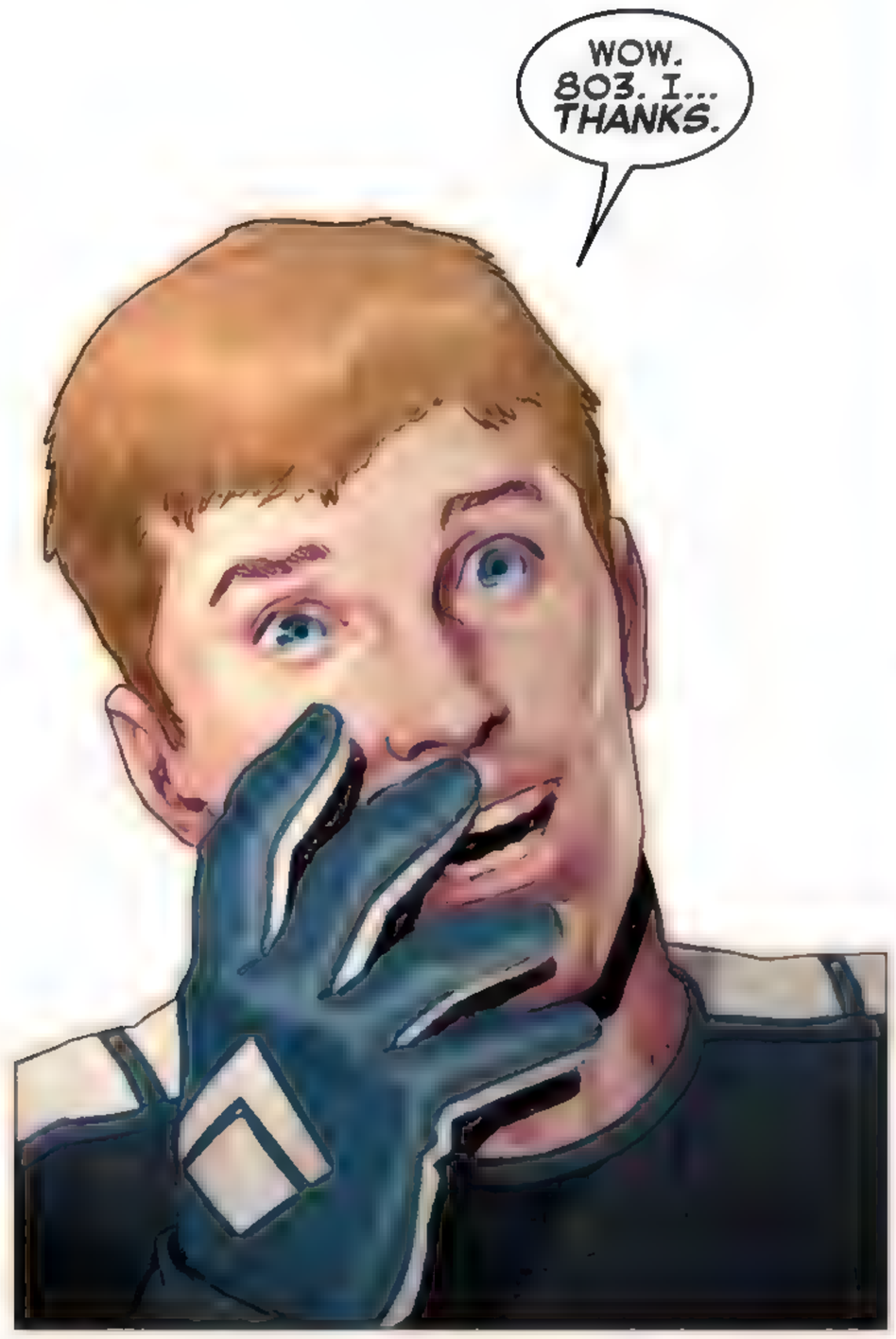
A PLEASURE PLANET. GOOD. FOLLOW HIM.

AND THEN UNLEASH OUR FRIEND, PIK ROLLO.

GGGGRRRRRRRR

WHAT DID YOU WANT TO SHOW ME, 803?

IT'S NOT A SONG, BUT...
...I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT GET SOME USE OUT OF THESE.


WOW. 803. I... THANKS.

OOF. GONNA NEED A CANE WHILE I FIGURE OUT A P.T. ROUTINE.
PERHAPS I CAN FASHION ONE OUT OF WHAT REMAINS OF THE RUMBLE SUIT.
YOU'RE THE BEST, 803.
WAITASEC.

WHO'S FLYING THE SHIP?
YOUR FRIEND, OF COURSE.
MY WHO?

THE KLYNTAR!

FLASH, WE SHOULD PROBABLY TALK.

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #4

THIS IS... STRANGE.

TELL ME ABOUT IT.

HOW COME YOU'VE NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE?

I COULDN'T. SINCE I WAS CLEANSED*, I HAVE CHANGED. I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO...GROW. SO NOW...HERE WE ARE.

*AS SEEN IN GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES!

HOW LONG CAN YOU STAY LIKE THIS?

WITH PRACTICE, ABOUT HALF AN EARTH DAY.

RIGHT NOW... ABOUT AN HOUR.

BUT I PREFER OUR JOINED STATE.

I CAN FEEL THE COSMOS MORE CLEARLY THAT WAY.

AND YOU ARE A WONDERFUL HOST--

I MEAN... PARTNER.

SORRY. AS YOU SAID, THIS IS STRANGE.

PARTNER, HUH?

THAT WORKS FOR ME.

HEY... DO YOU HEAR THAT HUMMING SOUND?

ARE YOU INTACT?

YEAH... THANKS TO YOU WRAPPING ME UP.

I AM UNABLE TO CONTINUE TO FORM WORDS IN THIS STATE.

WE SHALL CONTINUE OUR TALK LATER.

BUT I'M WITH YOU, FLASH.

ALWAYS.

THANKS.

NEXT TIME WE CHAT, TELL ME YOUR NAME.

803? WHERE YOU AT, BUDDY?

THERE YOU ARE.

SIR, WE'RE UNDER ATTACK.

YOU DON'T SAY.

I SCANNED THE ATTACKING SHIP, AND THE ONLY LIFE FORM I COULD READ WAS ONE PIK ROLLO.

A VICIOUS CRIMINAL WHO...

GRRRRRRRRR.

...FOLLOWED US DOWN TO THE PLANET?

JPSM 44

ALL RIGHT, PIK ROLLO, I JUST GOT THIS BABY INSURED, SO MAYBE WE CAN EXCHANGE INFO AND--

WAIT... SERIOUSLY?

803, ARE YOU SURE ABOUT YOUR SCAN?

SIR, PIK ROLLO IS WANTED FOR MURDER, TREASON AND ARSON IN FIFTEEN SYSTEMS.

SHE'S A MENACE.

BUT...

...SHE'S ADORABLE.

YOUR HEAD BELONGS TO MERCURIO!

WHAM!

GAH!

AT LAST, SWEET RELEASE1110001111001!

ROAR!

803?!

OKAY. GLOVES ARE OFF.

WHAM!

OOF!

LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW YOU, SAD PANDA.

AND I DON'T KNOW ANY MERCURIO.

BUT YOU HURT MY FRIEND.

KRSH

AND THAT PISSES ME OFF.

AND WHEN I GET PISSED...

RRRRRRIFFFP!

...MY PARTNER TAKES OVER.

BBBZZZZTTT!

AAAAGH!

RRRAAAAAH!

MASTER NEEDS WARM BODIES.

MASTER NEEDS WARM BODIES FOR COMBAT.

MASTER WILL BE PLEASED.

MASTER WILL LOVE US.

PRETTY SURE THIS IS YOUR FAULT, SAD PANDA.

I AM NOT A PAN-DUH. I AM A RUU'LTO.

AND I AM NOT EXPERIENCING ANY SADNESS AT THE MOMENT.

I FEEL ONLY *RAGE.*

YEAH, WELL...

...RAGE MIGHT COME IN HANDY IF THIS GOES WHERE I THINK IT'S GOING...

PRAISE THE MASTER!

AH. AT LAST. TRUE WARRIORS TO TEST MY BATTLE BEASTS.

YOUR PATHETIC LIVES AS YOU KNEW THEM ARE NOW OVER.

ALL THAT MATTERS NOW IS...

...THE ARENA!

YOUR DEATHS AT THE HANDS OF MY BATTLE BEASTS SHALL NOT BE FOR NOTHING, PATHETIC URCHINS.

ARENA. AWESOME. I HATE BEING RIGHT.

IF WE LIVE THROUGH THIS, I MIGHT HAVE TO KILL YOU, PIK.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO TRY. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH: I AM SORRY.

NONE OF THIS WAS MY CHOICE.

SO YOU *ACCIDENTALLY* SHOT MY SHIP AND CRASHED US HERE?

MERCURIO... HE HAS MY CHILD.

YOUR SKILLS IN COMBAT WILL TEACH ME THE WAYS OF WAR. ONCE MASTERED, I SHALL FEED THIS KNOWLEDGE TO MY BHIV, MY CREATIONS, AND WE SHALL TAKE OVER THE UNIVERSE!

PRAISE THE MASTER!

YOUR KID, HUH?

OKAY, GIMME THE DETAILS BEFORE WE GET DISMEMBERED.

MERCURIO IS GRAMOSIAN.

GRAMOSIANS WERE A PEACEFUL PEOPLE BUT THEIR PLANET REQUIRES VAST QUANTITIES OF ENERGY IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.

SOUNDS FAMILIAR.

WHEN HIS PEOPLE WOULD NOT TAKE THIS ENERGY FROM OTHER PLANETS, MERCURIO WENT ROGUE.

HE HAS BEEN AMASSING WEAPONS FROM ALL OVER THE GALAXY.

THAT SOUNDS FAMILIAR, TOO.

SO HOW DID YOU GET ROPED INTO THIS?

MERCURIO RAIDED MY PLANET. KIDNAPPED ITS GREATEST WARRIORS.

AND NOW YOU'VE BEEN KIDNAPPED AGAIN BY THIS GUY. YOU SHOULD GET OUT LESS.

MERCURIO EXTORTED US ALL INTO A CRIMINAL LIFE.

I'M THE ONLY ONE STILL ALIVE.

HE CALLS YOU THE USURPER. YOU HAVE *HARMED* HIS PLANS.

SO HE SENT ME TO COLLECT YOUR HEAD.

I'M PRETTY FOND OF MY HEAD, SO I CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT.

BUT...I'LL MAKE YOU A DEAL.

I'M LISTENING.

KRK!

MERCURIO IS NEVER GOING TO LET YOU OUT OF THIS ARRANGEMENT.

THUGS NEVER DO.

WE SURVIVE THIS, THOUGH... WE GO TAKE MERCURIO OUT *TOGETHER*.

AND SAVE YOUR KID.

DEAL?

EVEN THOUGH SHE WANTS TO LIBERATE MY NOODLE FROM MY BODY, I GOTTA ADMIT, PIK ROLLO IS ACTUALLY PRETTY AWESOME.

AND I WON'T LIE: STILL TOTALLY ADORABLE TO ME.

DESPITE THE FACT THAT SHE SOMETIMES DRINKS THE BLOOD OF HER OPPONENTS FOR FUN.

TOGETHER, WE FOUGHT.

AND FOUGHT.

AND FOUGHT.

WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME.

WAITING FOR THIS MASTER DUMMY TO MAKE A MISTAKE.

AND LIKE MOST DUMMIES: HE DELIVERED.

AT LAST, THE GREAT WHITE BEAR HAS FALLEN.

YOU. WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

VENOM.

APPROPRIATE. TELL ME, VENOM. WHAT HAS MADE YOU THE GREATEST WARRIOR MY ARENA HAS EVER SEEN?

WELL, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN FUN AT PARTIES.

THIS IS A TIRESOME ATTEMPT AT HUMOR.

HAH!

BUT MY QUERY REQUIRED NO HUMOR.

AND YOUR HUMOR WAS NOT HUMOROUS.

WHY ARE YOU LAUGHING?

I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT A LINE FROM AN OLD TV SHOW...

"I LOVE IT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER."

SKRCH!

GGGGHHHHHHZZZZ100100100 1!

PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE SEEN THIS COMING.

CH-CHK!

CH-CHK!

CH-CHK!

CH-CHK!

CH-CHK!

CH-CHK!

PRAISE THE NEW MASTERS!

PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE SEEN *THIS* COMING, TOO.

YOU ARE ALL FREE! SO DECLARE YOUR NEW MASTERS!

WE LIVE TO SERVE! TELL US HOW TO SERVE YOU!

UM...LET US SLEEP ON IT. JUST...STAY HERE. I'LL--WE'LL, UH, GET BACK TO YOU.

WHY ARE WE RETURNING TO YOUR CRAFT? IT'S MOST LIKELY--

NOT LEAVING WITHOUT WHATEVER IS LEFT OF MY FRIEND. HE--

--WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED.

THOUGHT YOU WERE A GONER, 803.

SADLY, THE PANDA DID NOT KILL ME. I HAVE BEEN REBUILDING THE SHIP SINCE I PUT MYSELF BACK TOGETHER.

MY APOLOGIES FOR NEARLY DESTROYING YOU.

I ONLY WISH YOU HAD FINISHED THE JOB.

EXCUSE ME?

DON'T MIND HIM, ROLLO. HE'S JUST GOT A SMALL DEATH WISH.

WE HAD A DEAL, VENOM. IF YOU DO NOT HONOR IT, I SHALL KILL YOU BOTH.

NOBODY'S KILLING ANYBODY. C'MON...

...LET'S GO RESCUE YOUR KID.

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #5

"I WASN'T ALWAYS A GOOD GUY.

"IN FACT...

"...I USED TO BE PRETTY BAD.

"IT'S A POOR EXCUSE, BUT I DIDN'T EXACTLY HAVE A LOT OF POSITIVE ROLE MODELS IN MY HOUSE.

"BUT THAT ALL CHANGED WHEN I SAW WHAT A GOOD GUY REALLY LOOKS LIKE.

"SPIDER-MAN.

"THE TRUTH IS, IT TOOK A WHILE FOR THE WEB-HEAD'S WAYS TO REALLY, Y'KNOW, CHANGE ME.

"BUT WHERE I AM NOW? ALL STARTED WITH SPIDER-MAN.

"HE WAS MY FIRST STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION."

AND I'M STILL TAKING STEPS, 803. STILL TRYING TO BE A GOOD GUY.

SIR, I UNDERSTAND. BUT AS YOU JUST SAID, THAT CHANGE TOOK A LONG TIME.

ALL CHANGE TAKES TIME. LIKE ADJUSTING TO THESE PROSTHETICS YOU MADE FOR ME, RIGHT? TAKES TIME.

YES. I'M HAPPY THAT YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPY IS COMING ALONG. BUT SIR...

...ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN TRUST PIK ROLLO?

YOU WORRIED ABOUT ME, 803?

YES, SIR. I AM.

AND TRUSTING PIK ROLLO IS NOT THE ONLY PART OF THIS "PLAN" OF YOURS THAT CONCERNS ME.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY PLAN?

THERE ARE SIMPLY TOO MANY VARIABLES. ANY ONE OF THEM GOES POORLY AND WE ALL DIE.

DEATH AND DESTRUCTION. I THOUGHT THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED.

MY DESTRUCTION, SIR. NOT YOURS.

YOUR CONCERN IS DULY NOTED. AND APPRECIATED, 803.

BUT DON'T FORGET: YOU HAVE ONE OF THE TOUGHEST PARTS IN THIS WHOLE THING.

SO, IT'S HIGHLY LIKELY YOU WON'T LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE ME GET DOUBLE-CROSSED.

THIS IS MEANT TO COMFORT ME?

NOT REALLY, NO.

WE CAN TRUST PIK ROLLO. AND IF YOU CAN'T, THEN TRUST ME. OKAY?

ALL RIGHT, SIR.

YOU READY FOR THIS?

I AM PREPARED FOR ANY OUTCOME.

ARE YOU?

LET'S FIND OUT.

THIS IS REALLY OUR ONLY OPTION?

IT'S OUR *STEALTHIEST* OPTION, ANYWAY.

AND YOU'RE SURE THIS IS GOING TO WORK?

YEAH.

PROBABLY.

IS THAT HUMOR? IT IS UNFORTUNATELY TIMED.

WE'RE GOING TO GET YOUR KID BACK, PIK...

...AS LONG AS WE SURVIVE THIS PART.

SEE? I TOLD YOU IT'D WORK.

I PRAY TO THE GODS I NEVER HAVE TO ENDURE SUCH A THING AGAIN.

AW, YOU'RE WELCOME.

PLEASE LET THERE BE SILENCE NOW.

THESE BOOTS ARE KILLING ME. I KEEP GETTING SHIN SPLINTS.

I TOLD YOU, STRETCH BEFORE GUARD DUTY.

BUT WE'RE *NOT* ON GUARD DUTY--

SHH. YOU HEAR THAT?

HEY GANG. WE'RE HERE FOR THE PUNCHING AND KICKING, BUT IF YOU WANT TO SKIP TO SURRENDERING WE CAN WORK WITH THAT, TOO.

HUH. THEY'RE NOT RUNNING. JUST SORT OF... MOSEYING?

HAVE I LOST TOUCH WITH MY INTIMIDATING SIDE?

YOU ARE LESS THAN INTIMIDATING.

COMING FROM A SPACE MURDER BEAR, I'M GONNA HAVE TO TAKE THAT.

YEAH, THEY'RE NOT RUNNING OR SOUNDING AN ALARM. WHICH MEANS ONE THING...

DAMMIT, PIK.

...I VOUCHED FOR YOU.

AND FOR THAT, I AM SORRY.

YOU'RE GONNA BE.

GGGRGRRRGGGAAAAHHHH!

AAAH!

PIN HIM DOWN, PIN HIM DOWN!

TRUSTED... YOU...

GAAH!

I HAD NO CHOICE.

I MUST PROTECT MY CHILD.

NO MATTER THE COST.

ENOUGH! THE MEAT HAS BEEN PROPERLY TENDERIZED.

NOW GIVE IT THE TREATMENT. FULL VOLUME.

MICHAEL GRAHAM

AAAAAGHH!

AAAAAGHH!

SO, I FINALLY MEET THE MAN SO INTENT ON MEDDLING IN MY AFFAIRS.

AT LAST.

YOU SONUVABITCH!
YOU STILL HAVE SOME FIGHT LEFT IN YOU.
ADMIRABLE.

BUT YOU SEE, WITHOUT YOUR KLYNTAR...

...YOU'RE NOTHING.

SCHUNK!

THANK YOU FOR DELIVERING MY PRIZE.

YOU DIE AN HONORABLE DEATH--

WAIT!

YOU NEED HIM ALIVE. FOR NOW.

YOUR PRIZE? IT IS BONDED TO *HIM.*

IF YOUR PLAN DOESN'T WORK, THEN YOU MAY NEED HIM TO TELL YOU HOW TO FIX THIS... *THING.*

DON'T YOU LAY A HAND ON--

UNGH!

TAKE HIM TO THE PIT.

IT WOULD SEEM I AM IN YOUR DEBT, PIK ROLLO.

YOU PLAYED YOUR PART WELL.

PERHAPS *TOO* WELL.

NNGGAAAGHH!

BZZZ

STILL FIGHT LEFT IN YOU, TOO.

WHAM

ALSO ADMIRABLE.

BUT ILL-ADVISED.

BBBZZZZZZTTTTTT!

AIIIIEEEEEEEEE!

TAKE HER TO THE PIT.

ONCE SHE WAKES, TELL HER TO KILL HER FRIEND OR I WILL DROWN HER CHILD.

AS FOR YOU...IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE, DON'T YOU THINK?

TIME FOR YOU TO BE WHAT YOU *WERE*.

KKK-
KLANG!

OOF!

KKKK-
CHUNG

...SEE...? TOLD YOU...IT'D... WORK...

...IF I WASN'T SO BROKEN...

...I WOULD BREAK YOU.

I WASN'T ALWAYS A GOOD GUY.

BUT PEOPLE CAN CHANGE.

I CHANGED.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT?

NA NA NA NA NA NA NA NA NA NA NA NA

IT WAS FUN WHILE IT LASTED.

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #6
"BROKEN PLAYS"

"BROKEN PLAYS WERE ALWAYS MY THING.

"NO SET PLANS.

"ON THE FIELD...

"...IN THE FIELD.

"TRUTH IS...MAKING IT UP AS I GO MEANS I DON'T HAVE TO ASK FOR HELP.

"SOMETIMES IT WORKS OUT...

"...OTHER TIMES NOT SO MUCH.

"BUT IN SPACE? IT'S TOUGH TO MAKE IT UP AS YOU GO. EVEN TOUGHER TO GO IT ALONE.

"SO... I'M TRYING A *NEW* TACTIC.

"MAKING AN ACTUAL PLAN.

"ASKING FOR HELP.

"AND AS YOU CAN SEE...

...IT'S GOING GREAT.

WHEN MY STRENGTH RETURNS, I WILL STRANGLE THE LIFE OUT OF YOU.

C'MON, PIK. WE'RE RIGHT WHERE WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE.

ARE WE? AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR *PARTNER?*

IS *HE* WHERE HE NEEDS TO BE...?

BROKEN PLAYS

CHAPTER SIX!

THIS FEELING...SO STRANGE.

I AM NOT WEARING YOU.

AND YOU ARE NOT WEARING ME.

WE ARE ONE.

AND... I CAN FEEL YOUR HUNGER.

THE HUMAN DIDN'T UNDERSTAND YOU. HE KEPT YOU PURE.

STARVED YOU.

BUT FEAR NOT, MY FRIEND...

...I WILL KEEP YOU WELL-FED.

TOGETHER, WE SHALL BRING ORDER TO THE GRAMOSIAN EMPIRE.

AND THEN PUT THE EMPIRE-- OUR EMPIRE-- IN ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE GALAXY.

AND WE SHALL DESTROY ANY WHO STAND IN OUR WAY.

STARTING WITH THE HUMAN.

CLICK!

SEE? RIGHT ON SCHEDULE.

WELL, HOW BAD IS IT?

I WOULD SAY IT LOOKS LIKE THE END.

YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME WITH 803.

AND I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

IT'S WORSE THAN YOU THOUGHT. HE HAS AN *ARMADA.*

NO! YOU MUST OBEY *ME!*

FIRST RULE OF SYMBIOTE CLUB? YOU GOTTA BE *SYMBIOTIC.*

GIVE HIM A SQUEEZE, PARTNER.

WITH PLEASURE.

KKKKKK-RKKK-RAKK!

NO-- NO-- GGGHHRRRAAAAHHH!

AHHHHHH

KKKRRKKKA!

HEY. THAT'S ENOUGH.

VENOM, STOP!

I... I'M SORRY... I...

IT'S MY FAULT. I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET YOU ANYWHERE NEAR THAT GUY.

PLEASE, LET ME RETURN TO WHERE I BELONG.

CLICK

...FOOL...

KLANGALANGALANGALANGALANG

I GAVE YOU A CHANCE TO BE GREAT AGAIN.

BUT YOU ARE *WEAKER* THAN THE HUMAN.

KILL THEM!

PEW!

WHY ARE WE RUNNING? THE FACES IN NEED OF CRUSHING ARE *BEHIND* US.

PEW! PEW!

MERCURIO CALLED FOR BACKUP.

WHICH IS SMART.

BUT IT TURNS OUT, SO AM I. 'CAUSE LIKE I TOLD YOU BEFORE, I MADE A PLAN. AND MORE IMPORTANTLY...

...I ASKED FOR HELP.

MY ARMADA--

WAS STOLEN.

YOU'RE NO LEADER. YOU'RE JUST A THIEF.

THIS FURRY THING. IT'S A FRIEND?

IQA? PIK ROLLO. PIK ROLLO? IQA.

FOR THE RECORD: I HAVE PLACED A HUSBANDRY CLAIM ON THE HUMAN.

HE'S ALL YOURS.

FOR THE MASTER!

I'M NOT YOUR MASTER!

YOU'RE *FREE!*

FOR THE MASTER WHO *FREED* US!

I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU, HUMAN.

YOU DO HAVE HALF A BRAIN.

BUT I WASN'T WRONG ABOUT YOU, KLYNTAR.

YOU'VE BEEN STARVING.

FOR RAGE. FOR ANGER.

BUT YOU WON'T TAKE WHAT'S YOURS.

BECAUSE YOU'RE PATHETIC.

YOU'RE WEAK.

YOU'RE NOTHING.

GRGGRRAAAAAH!

BAH. A HAND SWATTING A FLY.

EVEN NOW HE HOLDS YOU BACK.

LEAVE HIM.

COME WITH ME, AND TOGETHER--

AAAGH!

WHAM

WE ARE NOT WEAK...

...WE ARE VENOM!

WHAM!

...WAIT... NO... STOP...

...VENOM... STOP...

WHAM!

STOP!

SIR, PLEASE. STOP.

I DIDN'T... I DON'T...

IT'S OKAY, SIR. IT'S OVER NOW.

CHOOM!

LOOK OUT!

GAH!

CHOOM!

WE SHALL MEET AGAIN, VENOM. AND NEXT TIME, YOU BOTH DIE.

I'M SORRY, SIR. IT'S MY FAULT HE GOT AWAY. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO DEACTIVATE ME.

ONLY THING I'M GONNA DO IS *THANK* YOU, 803.

YOU DID GOOD--GOT EVERYONE HERE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

AND YOU STOPPED ME FROM GOING TOO FAR.

HILLA!

MY CHILD. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES, MOTHER. ARE THERE ANY LEFT FOR ME TO DESTROY?

THAT'S MY GIRL.

THANK YOU.

TOLDJA MY PLAN WOULD WORK.

NEXT TIME TELL ME THE *WHOLE* PLAN.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, *NEXT* TIME?

YOUR SHIP NEEDS A *CREW.* HILLA AND I NEED A *HOME.*

AND I NEED A *QUEST.*

YOU WANT TO COME, TOO?

I MUST MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF IN ORDER TO RULE MY PEOPLE.

ALSO, YOU SEEM UNSTABLE AND I FIND THAT ATTRACTIVE.

ALL RIGHT, WELL, HERE'S THE DEAL.

I'M NO CAPTAIN, AND THIS IS NO TEAM.

BUT IF YOU WANT TO PUNCH STUFF, THEN WELCOME ABOARD.

ALSO, THERE'S NO PAY.

SIR, WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE BHIV? THERE'S NOT ENOUGH ROOM TO KEEP ALL THESE ROBOTS.

THAT'S OKAY. I KNOW WHERE TO TAKE THEM.

HAIL THE MASTER!

JUST IN CASE MERCURIO TRIES TO BOTHER YOU AGAIN, THE BHIV CAN HELP YOU FROM HERE ON OUT.

GUYS? MEET YOUR NEW MASTER: CORA.

HAIL CORA!

...JUST A LITTLE INSURANCE, IN CASE YOU GUYS HAVE ANY OTHER TROUBLE.

HAIL THE MASTER!

I'M NOT--

<HAIL HJOU! PRAISE HJOU!>

LET'S GET OUTTA HERE, 803...

WE SHOULD PROBABLY TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.

I AM SORRY. BEING BONDED TO MERCURIO...BROUGHT OUT OLD FEELINGS.

THAT... THAT WASN'T ME.

I PUT YOU IN A DANGEROUS SITUATION YOU WEREN'T PREPARED FOR AND YOU FELL *OFF* THE WAGON.

BELIEVE ME. I KNOW THAT FEELING.

I JUST NEED TO KNOW WHERE YOUR HEAD'S AT NOW.

WE MOVING FORWARD? OR BACKWARD?

FORWARD.

SO, I DID IT.

MADE A PLAN.

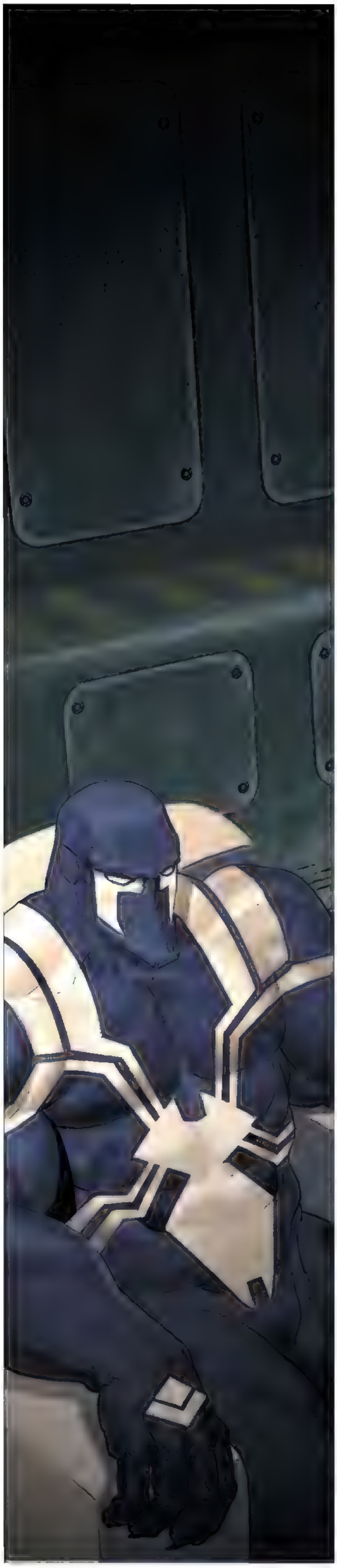
STUCK TO IT.

ASKED FOR HELP.

GOT IT.

AND ACTUALLY LIVED TO TELL THE TALE.

MAYBE...WELL, MAYBE EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE OKAY FOR *ONCE*...



VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #7

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS SCRIBBLING.

WHERE I'M FROM, SHIPS HAVE NAMES.

ARE THEY ALL THIS TERRIBLE?

HOW DARE YOU?

FOR ONCE, I AM IN AGREEMENT WITH IQA.

THANK YOU, PIK.

LET'S ALL AGREE ON ONE THING...

USS ENTERPRISE

...IT'S NICE TO HAVE A NEW BOAT.

ESPECIALLY SINCE OURS IS DESTROYED.

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS VESSEL'S PREVIOUS OWNERS WILL MISS IT.

AUTOMATONS GONE MAD.

SUCK IT, SKYNET!

YOUR VICTORY CRIES ARE ALSO CONFUSING.

SKYNET. C'MON.

TOUGH PLANET.

HEY, 803, FINISH UP YOUR SALVAGE AND THEN LET'S GET OUTTA HERE.

UNDERSTOOD, SIR!

YOUR CHILD IS AN ADMIRABLE WARRIOR.

A COMPLIMENT? FROM YOU?

MOTHERHOOD IS NO EASY TASK, PIK ROLLO.

FRRZZT

IT FRIGHTENS EVEN A SEASONED WARRIOR LIKE ME.

YOU WILL MAKE A FINE MOTHER, IQA, SHOULD IT EVER BE YOUR DESIRE.

MOTHER-- DID YOU SEE?

YES, MY DARLING. YOU SHOWED NO MERCY LIKE A GOOD LITTLE GIRL.

SIR?

LEMME GUESS, YOU DON'T LIKE THE SHIP NAME EITHER?

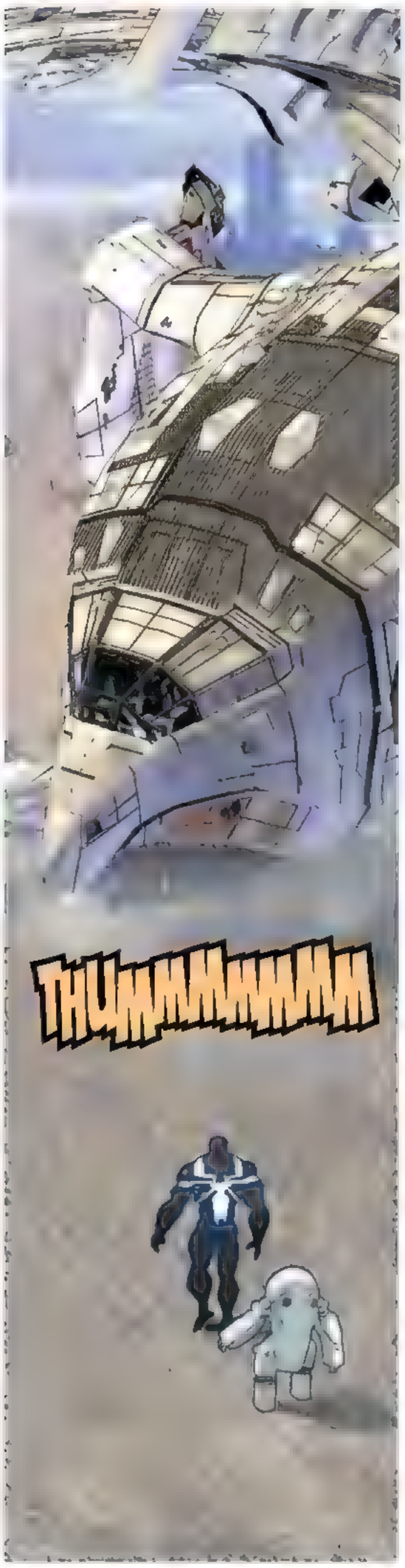
MY CONCERN IS NOT WITH YOUR FOOLISHLY NAMED SHIP. IT'S WITH THAT SHIP...

WHAT SHIP? OH.

THAT ONE.

ANY CHANCE THEY'RE FRIENDLY?

GIVEN OUR LUCK, DO YOU EVEN HAVE TO ASK?



TARNA.
ALLY OR FOE?
SHE'S AN AGENT OF THE COSMOS LIKE ME. SHE'S *SUPPOSED* TO BE TRAINING ME.
ALLY. OR. FOE?
LITTLE OF *BOTH.* GIVE US A SEC.
COME TO TEACH ME THE WAYS OF THE FORCE?
THE AGENTS OF THE COSMOS ARE ACTUALLY...
...QUITE *PLEASED* WITH YOUR PROGRESS.
I'M BETTING THAT WASN'T EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
NONETHELESS, I MUST AGREE WITH THEM.
YOU HAVE SHOWN PATIENCE, BRILLIANCE, AND EVEN *CREATIVITY* WITH YOUR KLYNTAR. YOU ARE A WORTHY HOST.
OKAY, YOU'RE BEING TOO NICE. SKIP TO THE BAD. WHAT'S WRONG? DID I FORGET TO FILL OUT A TIME CARD, USE COARSE LANGUAGE--
YOU ARE NOT THE PROBLEM I HAVE COME TO ADDRESS, FLASH.
MAY WE SPEAK PRIVATELY?

OH, SO YOUR ISSUE IS WITH THEM? 'CAUSE MY CREW--

YOUR SELECTION OF COMPANIONS IS DUBIOUS, BUT THEY ARE NOT THE ISSUE.

I WISH TO SPEAK *WITHOUT* KLYNTAR.

WHOA.

YOU'RE A *SKRULL*?!

THIS UPSETS YOU?

SKRULLS AND FOLKS FROM EARTH HAVEN'T ALWAYS PLAYED WELL TOGETHER.

MY ALLEGIANCE IS TO THE COSMOS.

NOW, PLEASE, A MOMENT ALONE.

CURIOUS. ARE THEY GOING TO MATE?

I DON'T THINK SHE IS HIS TYPE.

SHE'S A SKRULL, SHE CAN BE ANYTHING HE DESIRES.

I WAS SPEAKING OF THE *KLYNTAR*. ARE THEY...?

NO. OR... MAYBE?

UNGH, MOMMMM.

SO, THAT'S YOUR *REAL* FORM?

CORRECT. I USE THE OTHER TO INTIMIDATE. NO DIFFERENT THAN YOUR PUFFY ARTIFICE.

PUFFY, HUH?

SO, WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE ABLE TO WEAR OTHER PEOPLE'S FACES?

THAT IS NOT IMPORTANT.

FLASH, WE FELT A DEEPLY UPSETTING PULSE FROM YOUR KLYNTAR.

WE FELT *RAGE*.

YEAH, THAT'S ON ME. HE GOT TAKEN BY A JERK NAMED MERCURIO*, BUT HE'S FINE--

YES. WE *KNOW* WHEN OUR AGENTS FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS.

BUT THAT WAS ONLY THE *FIRST* PULSE WE FELT.

*AS SEEN IN ISSUES #5 AND #6 OF VENOM!

AND THE PULSE HAS ONLY GROWN SINCE THEN. THE *RAGE* HAS ONLY GROWN SINCE THEN.

WHAT? I HAVEN'T... I MEAN, *HE* HASN'T--

YOU HAVE BEEN SPENDING MORE TIME APART. HAVEN'T YOU?

YEAH. THAT'S BAD?

NO--AS YOU CAN SEE, I HAVE TRAINED MY KLYNTAR IN THE SAME MANNER. BUT SEPARATION REQUIRES *TRUST.*

AND YOUR KLYNTAR CANNOT BE TRUSTED.

HE HAS A NAME, YOU KNOW--

VENOM IS NOT TO BE TRUSTED.

FLASH, THE CLEANSING, IT'S NOT AN EXACT SCIENCE NOT ALL KLYNTARS EVEN SURVIVE IT

THOSE THAT DO MUST BE MONITORED FOR IMPURITIES

YOU'RE SAYING WE'RE NOT PURE?

NO

HE ISN'T PURE

SO WE DOUBLE DIP IT.

THAT IS NOT HOW THIS WORKS--

OKAY, FINE, I'LL TAKE A DIP, TOO--

WE WILL FIND YOU A REPLACEMENT--

REPLACE-- NO. IMPURE OR NOT, THAT'S MY *FRIEND* YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

THIS IS NOT A NEGOTIATION.

AND THAT? IS NOT YOUR FRIEND.

SO, WHAT HAPPENS? YOU TAKE HIM BACK TO THE KLYNTAR PLANET AND HE *RETIRES?*

NO

HE IS TO BE *RETURNED* TO THE COSMOS

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A NICE WAY OF SAYING YOU'RE GONNA KILL MY FRIEND.

YOU MISUNDERSTAND. BUT IT DOES NOT MATTER.

THIS IS NOT A REQUEST.

YOU WANT HIM? YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO GO THROUGH ME.

HM. PERHAPS THEY ARE MATING AFTER ALL.

I AM NOT CONVINCED YOU KNOW WHAT MATING ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE.

I DON'T WANT TO HARM YOU.

YOU GOT A FUNNY WAY OF SHOWING THAT.

ALLEGIANCE TO A SIMPLE KLYNTAR?

PERHAPS MY INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF YOU WAS CORRECT

THEY'RE NOT TOOLS, TARNA.

ARE THEY... TRAINING...?

NO. TARNA HAS COME TO COLLECT YOU.

COLLECT ME?

YOU ARE TO BE RETURNED TO THE COSMOS.

RETURNED IS AN AGREEABLE WAY OF SAYING DESTROYED, ISN'T IT?

IT IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK--

I'M DONE THINNNKKK!!INNNGGG!

THAT IS CLEARLY COMBAT.

YOU ARE NOT INCORRECT.

WE SHOULD ASSIST.

YOU HELP FLASH, I WILL HELP THE INKY PUDDLE.

WAIT HERE WITH 803, CHILD.

BUT MOMMM...

YOU MAY PLAY WITH WHAT'S LEFT.

ROOOAAAAR!

PREPARE FOR THE WRATH OF--

GUUHH!

STAND DOWN, SERPENT-HAIR

YOU HAVE MADE ME BLEED.

AT LAST, A TRUE CHALLENGE.

WHAM

LESS TRASH TALK. MORE PUNCHING.

HOW ABOUT KICKING?

AGH!

THIS RESISTANCE IS POINTLESS.

GRRRAAAAAHHHH!

GAAAAGH!

AAHH!

STAND

DOWN

STOP!

YOUUU WWANNNNT MEEEE?

TTTHHHHEENNNN TALLLKKK TOOO MMEEEEEE!

KRACK!

AAAGHH!

HE'S... OUT...OF... CONTROL...

...STOP... PLEASE, VENOM, STOP!

SKREEEE!

RELEASE HER.

RELLEEASSE HERR, ABOOMMMINATION!

NOOWWW... CCCCOME WITTTH USSSSS ANDDD--

AAIIIIEEEEEE!

NO!

VENOM... STOP... PLEASE...

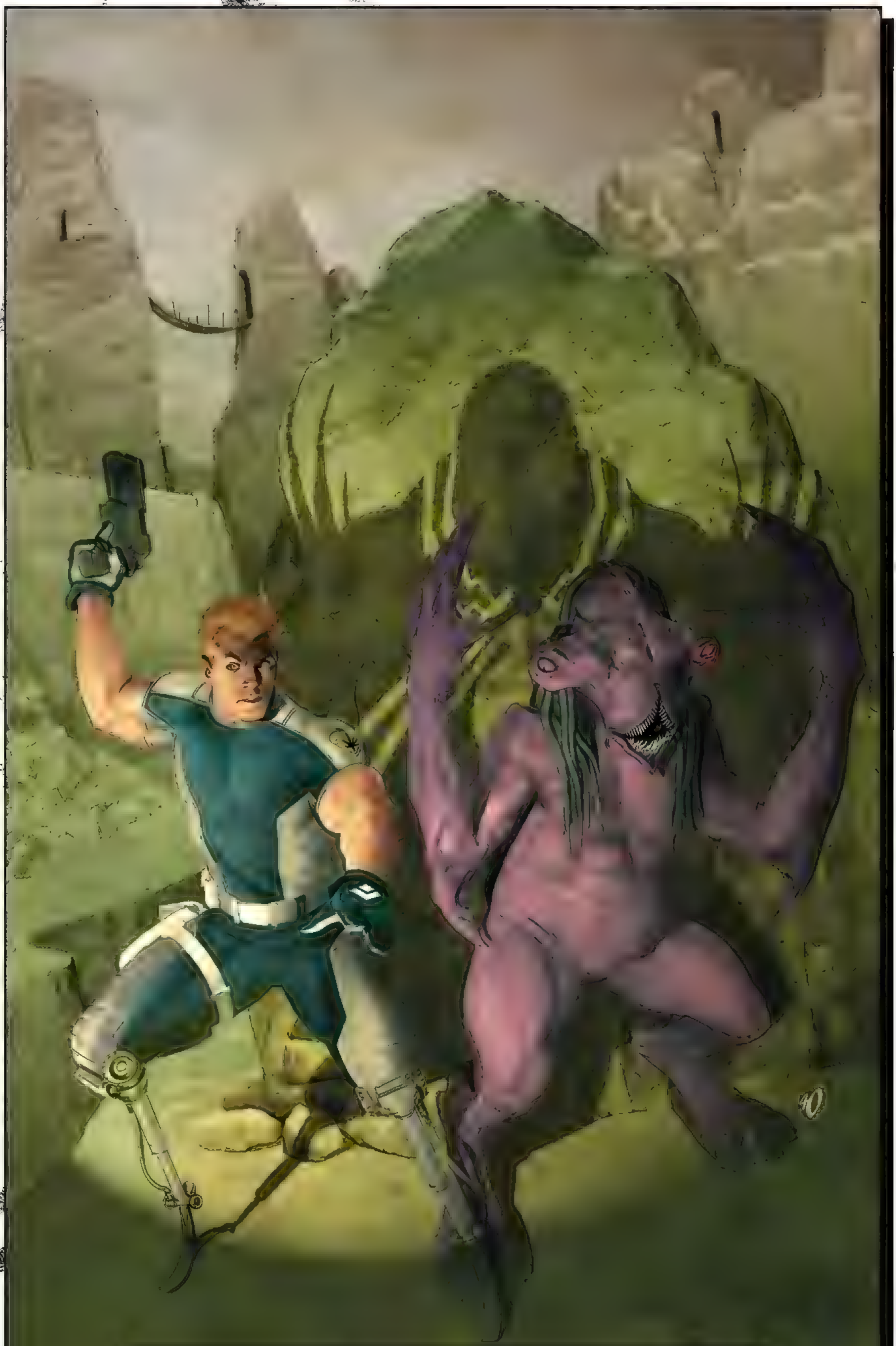
GRRRRRGGGHH!

FWHOO

RRAAAGGGGHHHH!

KA-THOOOM!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA



VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #8

FLASH, WHAT HAPPENED HERE...AND ON THE OTHER PLANETS...

...YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY OF THESE FOUL ACTIONS.

IQA IS RIGHT. THIS IS NOT ON YOU.

APPRECIATE THE KIND WORDS, GANG. BUT VENOM'S SENDING ME A MESSAGE.

AND THAT MESSAGE IS PRETTY CLEAR...

...THIS IS *ALL* MY FAULT.

SO, YOUR PARTNER IS *WRONGING* PREVIOUS RIGHTS?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

BUT WHY?

TO WHAT END?

BEST GUESS? HE'S TRYING TO SHOW ME WHAT HE BELIEVES HE TRULY IS...

...AN AGENT OF *CHAOS*, NOT THE COSMOS.

I HAVE CONTACTED THE AGENTS OF THE COSMOS. THEY WILL LOOK IN ON THE OTHER PLANETS, PROVIDE CARE AND CLEANUP WHERE IT IS NEEDED.

THANKS, TARNA. NOW WE CAN FOCUS ON *FINDING* VENOM.

FLASH. PERHAPS IT'S BEST YOU STAY AWAY FROM VENOM. LEAVE THIS HUNT TO ME AND YOUR FRIENDS.

I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU DESTROY HIM, TARNA, NO MATTER WHAT HE'S DONE.

DESTROY? I'M JUST TRYING TO CONTAIN HIM.

AND IN HIS CURRENT STATE, IF HE GETS HIS HANDS ON YOU...

I'M NOT SURE HE'LL EVER LET YOU GO

OR WHAT WOULD BE LEFT OF YOU IF HE DID.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

CORRUPTED KLYNTAR ARE NOT JUST CORROSIVE TO THEMSELVES

THEY CORRUPT THE HOST AS WELL. YOU'VE SEEN THIS, I'M SURE FELT IT

I KNOW YOU CARE FOR THIS KLYNTAR

BUT VENOM HAS GONE DARK

AND HE'S CLEARLY CALLING YOU OUT

DON'T TAKE THE BAIT, FLASH

SIR, I BELIEVE I MAY HAVE FOUND VENOM.

LEMME GUESS, HE'S HIT ANOTHER PLANET WE SAVED.

NO. HE'S ON A PLEASURE PLANET.

HE IS TAKING IN A HOLIDAY? WHAT A CURIOUS CREATURE.

803, SET A COURSE FOR THAT PLANET.

FLASH, PLEASE--

TARNA, I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY FOR WHAT VENOM DID TO YOU, TO YOUR KLYNTAR--

HE'LL HEAL, SO WILL I BUT--

I'M NOT LETTING VENOM HURT ANYONE ELSE. THIS IS ON ME. AND I'M GONNA STOP HIM.

ANYONE GETS IN MY WAY IS GONNA HAVE A PROBLEM.

DAMN THING JUST CAME IN OUTTA NOWHERE.

DIDN'T SAY A THING, JUST STARTED BUSTING UP THE JOINT.

BZZMM...

ANYBODY GOT IN ITS WAY...GOT PUT DOWN.

MPP...

THEN HE DRANK EVERYTHING IN THE WHOLE DAMN PLACE.

EXCEPT FOR THIS.

CHEAPEST BOTTLE IN THE WHOLE JOINT.

HE SAID HE LEFT THE BEST FOR HIS *DRINKING* BUDDY.

WOULD THAT BE ONE A YOU GUYS?

WE ARE SORRY FOR THE TROUBLE THAT WAS CAUSED. PLEASE KNOW THAT THE AGENTS OF THE COSMOS WILL RECOMPENSE ANY AND ALL DAMAGE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

FLASH? *FLASH?*

KRASH

FLASH, I AM SORRY. BUT THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT—

TARNA, STOP. I'M NOT GONNA--

YOU HAVE TO STAY AWAY FROM HIM

MOTHER, WHEN WILL WE BATTLE AGAIN?

GIVEN WHAT WE ARE CHASING? I HOPE NOT FOR A WHILE...

DO YOU FEAR THIS KLYNTAR?

I FEAR *NOTHING*, CHILD.

BUT ANGER IS A DANGEROUS FORCE.

IT HAS NO LIMITS. AND CARES NOT WHAT IT DESTROYS.

BBBLLL

I'LL PROTECT YOU FROM THE MONSTER, MOTHER.

THAT'S MY GIRL.

GET DOWN!

SMASH!

SSSTTTAAAyyyyyy

I HEAR YOUR CONCERNS, BUT--

FLASH, WAIT--

THIS ISN'T A DEBATE, TARNA--

LOOK OUT!

FLLASSHH

FEEELLINGGG THIRRRSSTYY...?

HA HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

GAAAH!

ITTTT'SSS GOOOODD TTOOO BEEE MEEE AGGGAAAINNNN!

BBBUUTTT III'VVVEE MISSSED YOUUU, FLASSSSHHH!

YOU'RE A CORRUPT ABOMINATION!

CORRRUPPPT?! I'LL SHOW YOU COORRRUPTTIOOONNN!

GGGGRRAAAAAHHH!

LEAVING ACTUALLY SOUNDS PRETTY GOOD-- HHRRRK!

BOOM!

TARNA!

WOOSH!

UNHAND HER, BEAST!

RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAA!

FLASH, LOOK OUT--

OOF!

WHACK!

FALL BACK. IT'S ME HE WANTS.

WE ARE NOT LEAVING YOU, FLASH.

WAIT FLASH... DON'T GO AFTER HIM!

PLEASE, VENOM! STOP!

STOP WHILE YOU CAN.

FSSSHHHHH!

SHOOOOOMMMMMM!

PLEASE TELL ME FLASH IS NOT ON THAT SHIP.

I AM AFRAID HE IS...

AND *OUR* SHIP HAS BEEN DAMAGED.

WE CANNOT FOLLOW THEM.

TARNA... WHAT DO WE DO?

IF YOU HAVE GODS...

...PRAY TO THEM.

I WAS ONLY TRYING TO SHOW YOU THE TRUTH, FLASH.

SHOW YOU WHAT I TRULY AM.

WHAT YOU TRULY ARE.

MANUAL OVERRIDE DISABLED.

WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU TAKING US, VENOM?

TO WHERE IT ALL BEGAN.

THE NORTH POLE? YOU'RE SANTA. THAT'S WHO YOU REALLY ARE?

NO TIME FOR HUMOR, FLASH. NOT NOW.

THEN WHAT *IS* THERE TIME FOR?

TO FOLLOW THE PATH.

THE PATH WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN ON.

THE PATH HOME.

THIS IS WHERE MY FIRST HOST WAS BORN. HE BROUGHT ME HERE THE DAY AFTER WE WERE BONDED.

SO YOU BROUGHT ME HERE TO KILL ME? I GUESS THERE'S SOME SYMMETRY TO THAT.

NO. TODAY IS NOT A DAY OF DYING.

TODAY IS A DAY...OF REBIRTH.

MY FIRST HOST CAME BACK TO HIS HOMEWORLD. AND MURDERED IT.

WE MURDERED IT.

HE WAS A CRUEL AND TWISTED SOUL WHO SHOWED ME THE CRUELTY AND TWISTEDNESS OF MY OWN SOUL.

VENOM, THIS IS NOT WHO YOU ARE. THIS WASN'T YOUR FAULT.

TELL THAT TO THEIR GHOSTS.

THIS... THIS IS WHO WE REALLY ARE. WHAT WE REALLY ARE.

AGENTS OF DEATH. NOT THE COSMOS.

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN GOOD.

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN SELFLESS.

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN KIND.

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN VENOM.

NOW IT'S TIME TO ACCEPT YOUR FATE...

FLASH THOMPSON

...AND ACHIEVE YOUR TRUE POTENTIAL.

NO, PLEASE!

FLASH THOMPSON IS DEAD.

LONG LIVE VENOM

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #9

VENOM... WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?

I'M TAKING YOU TO WHERE YOU BELONG.

I'M TAKING YOU HOME.

DAMMIT, I'M LATE.

OW! WHO THE HELL LEFT THEIR TOYS--

EUGENE?!

WHY DO YOU EVEN PLAY WITH DOLLS ANYMORE, YOU LITTLE *BABY?*

WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?

D-D-DADDY, I'M...I'M...

I'M SORRY.

NOT SO FAST NOW, EH, FLASH?!

KRAKK!

DAD... PLEASE... PLEASE DON'T.

I'M NOT GONNA HURT YOU.

I'M JUST GONNA KNOCK SOME SENSE INTO YOU, BOY.

"NO. DON'T. DON'T, YOU COWARD."

WHO YOU CALLIN' COWARD...

...PARKER?

YOU, FLASH.

YOU WANNA BEAT UP SOMEONE WHO WON'T FIGHT BACK? FINE.

BUT THAT MAKES YOU A COWA--

NO. THIS ISN'T ME. NOT ANYMORE.

BUT THIS IS YOU, FLASH.

--CHOKING?!

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN THIS WAY.

NO.

NO!

STOP!

STOP?

OF COURSE. YOU CAN STOP WHENEVER YOU WANT...

...ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

BUT YOU'RE STILL THIRSTY, AREN'T YOU?

GO ON, FLASH.

HAVE A DRINK.

NO. I'M DONE LISTENING TO YOU.

YOU HEAR ME?

I'M DONE!

OKAY. DEEP BREATH. YOU'RE OKAY.

YOU'RE OKAY.

JUST HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE.

OUT OF *HIM.*

THERE.

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

OR AN ONCOMING TRAIN?

STAY POSITIVE.

STAY FOCUSED.

AS BAD AS IT IS IN HERE...

...IT CAN'T BE WORSE OUT THERE.

GGGHHHRRRAAAHHHH!

AHHH! UNHAND ME, FOUL BEAST!

I DON'T THINK HE'S MUCH OF A LISTENER RIGHT NOW, IQA.

IS FLASH EVEN IN THERE?

YES. FLASH IS INSIDE VENOM. TRAPPED.

AND HIS VITALS SHOW THAT HE'S UNDER ATTACK.

HOW MUCH TIME DOES HE HAVE?

NOT MUCH

WHAT DO WE DO?

STICK TO THE PLAN.

AND HOPE WE SURVIVE

AND FLASH?

"FLASH IS ON HIS OWN."

FLASH THOMPSON.

PRESIDENT OF MY FAN CLUB?

YOU REALLY THOUGHT YOU COULD BE ME?

THAT'S WHAT YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE DOING IN THAT GETUP?

PATHETIC.

YOU'VE *ALWAYS* BEEN PATHETIC.

NO, SPIDEY, I...I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU, THIS ISN'T REAL--

NOT REAL?

THEN YOU WON'T FEEL *THIS.*

AAAAH!

DON'T.

MAKE.

ME--

AAGH! THERE'S THE VENOM I KNOW!

WHAM!

FLASH, YOU HAVE TO FIGHT THIS-- *AAGH!*

BAM!

GO ON. FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED, *COWARD.*

BOOOOM!

NO. YOU'RE NOT REAL. YOU'RE NOT REAL.

I'M REAL, FLASH. I'M RIGHT HERE. FIGHT THIS-- FIGHT HIM.

NO... NO...

NOOOOO!

FLASH? FLASH, HONEY, IS THAT YOU?

FLASH, I'M SCARED.

IT'S SO DARK.

NO. NO, NOT YOU, TOO...

...MOM.

YOU SAID THE MONSTERS COULDN'T HURT ME ANYMORE, FLASH.

AAGHH!

BUT YOU'RE A MONSTER!

AND YOU ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.

I'M NOT-- IT'S HIM, NOT ME...

NOOOOOO!!

WE'RE OUT OF TIME.

WE'RE TOO FAR FROM THE SHIP.

THEN THE SHIP'S GOING TO HAVE TO COME TO US.

803 LOCK ON OUR COORDINATES.

THE DEVICE, IT ISN'T--

WE'RE OUT OF TIME! MOVE!

BOOOOOM

STOP! STOP THIS! LEAVE HER ALONE! DON'T TOUCH HER!

STAY BACK

WHO IS HE FIGHTING?

HIMSELF

I'M SORRY, MOM.

I'M SORRY I COULDN'T PROTECT YOU.

FROM EVERYTHING.

FROM ME.

FLASH...?

TARNA, I'M IN POSITION.

K-K-Click

FIRE 803!

IT'S OKAY, BABY.

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

I LOVE YOU, FLASH.

AND I FORGIVE YOU.

I FORGIVE YOU.

GGGRRRAAAAAAGGHHH!

I'M SORRY, OLD FRIEND.

THANK YOU ALL.

FOR SAVING ME.

AND FOR NOT KILLING VENOM.

FLASH...

WHATEVER WE DO NEXT... IT'S UP TO YOU.

VENOM NEEDS TO GO HOME.

ARE YOU SURE?

NO.

BUT THE KLYNTAR MIGHT BE THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO CAN SAVE VENOM NOW.

I'LL PLOT A COURSE.

FLASH, WHEN YOU WERE INSIDE VENOM...WHAT DID HE SHOW YOU?

DARKNESS.

BUT...I SAW SOMETHING INSIDE HIM...

EARTH.

"...A SMALL, BRIGHT SPOT. I THOUGHT MAYBE IT WAS A WAY OUT, BUT...

PHILADELPHIA. NOW.

"...WHEN I RAN TOWARD IT...

"...I COULD NEVER REACH IT."

"WHAT DO YOU THINK IT WAS?"

NO... PLEASE... STOP!

"I DON'T KNOW, TARNA.

"IT WAS LIKE...

"...SOMETHING WAS *MISSING.*"

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #10

I WANT TO SEE THE TRIAL.

NOT MUCH TO SEE, HILLA.

AAAAAGGHHH!

VENOM—

MUST FACE THIS ALONE, TARNA. WE MUST SEE WHAT HE TRULY IS. AGENTS OF THE COSMOS ARE AGENTS OF PEACE--

DOES THAT LOOK LIKE PEACE TO YOU, MYNTRIL?

ALL I SEE IS A LOST KLYNTAR...

...AND I HOPE YOU ARE NOT LOST AS WELL.

AND IT'S NOT A TRIAL...

I HATE LIARS.

I WAS RAISED BY ONE.

...IT'S AN EXECUTION.

SO ME AND LIARS? DON'T GET ALONG.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.

I SHOULD HAVE PROTECTED MY *FRIEND.*

PERHAPS WE SHOULD APPEAL TO MYNTRIL.

HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE *LISTENING* TYPE.

SKREEEE!

BZZZZT!

THEY *LIED* TO ME, PIK.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

TO EVEN THE ODDS.

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A TERRIBLE IDEA.

MIND IF I JOIN YOU?

GONNA NEED YOU TO OPEN THAT DOOR, CHAMP.

ONLY ***KLYNTAR*** ARE ALLOWED IN THE ARENA, ***HUMAN.***

LET. US. THROUGH.

NEVER.

SO MUCH FOR DOING THIS THE EASY WAY.

WHAT HAS BECOME OF YOU, VENOM?

HSSSSSS!

YOU'VE FALLEN.

YOU LEAVE US NO CHOICE.

SKREEEE!

SHRAAAAAH!

GGGRRAAGH!

STAND DOWN!

I WILL NOT HAVE MORE BLOODSHED TODAY.

OPEN THE BLAST SHIELD.

BUT SIR, ONLY KLYNTAR--

IF THE HUMAN WISHES TO DIE WITH HIS FRIEND... SO BE IT.

CLICK

VRRRHMMM

FLASH, IT'S ME. JUMP YOU HAVE TO--

WAIT, WHAT--?!

TARNA!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

THE BLAST SHIELD, CLOSE IT--

FLASH-- GO!

VRRMMMM

THIS IS PROBABLY GONNA HURT.

HEY, VENOM, A LITTLE HELP?

WHAM

GAH!

PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE SEEN THAT COMING.

OOF!

PERFECT LANDING.

OKAY...

...NOW WHAT?

YOU BETRAY THE COSMOS?!

YOU LEFT ME NO CHOICE!

YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT THE *TRIALS* ENTAIL. VENOM ALONE MUST BE--

PROTECTED.

YOU'RE TRYING TO HURT OUR FRIEND.

YOUNGLING, YOU CANNOT POSSIBLY--

YOU TALK TOO MUCH.

GRRRRADAHHH!

RRRRRRRRAAAGHH!

HISSSS!

HEY!

AAAAA!

SLIKK!

WHUMP

WHY DON'T YOU PICK ON SOMEONE NOT REMOTELY YOUR OWN SIZE?

YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT WELL, YOUNGLING.

HILLA IS A ROLLO. ALL ROLLOS ARE *WARRIORS.*

STOP THE TRIALS MYNTRIL

AAAAGH!

HILLA!

THE TRIALS SHALL FINISH WHEN A JUDGMENT HAS BEEN MADE.

YOU AGENTS WANT TO JUDGE MY FRIEND? FINE. BUT YOU WON'T JUDGE HIM ALONE.

AND YOU WON'T DO IT WITH A FIGHT.

AND VENOM, WHEN THEY DUMPED YOU IN HERE, THEY DIDN'T ATTACK.

YOU DID.

THE AGENTS OF THE COSMOS ARE AGENTS OF *PEACE*, RIGHT?

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO GIVE PEACE A CHANCE.

YESSS, PEACCCE.

RAAARRRGH!

RRRRRR!

HISSSS!

SHOULDA SEEN THAT COMING, TOO.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

FLASH NO!

FLLASSSHH...?

I'M RIGHT HERE WITH YOU, BUDDY.

GRGGGRRRAAAAAAHHH!

WHAT—WHAT'S HAPPENING?

NOW...THE REAL TRIAL *BEGINS.*

UM, ARE WE DEAD? IS THIS KLYNTAR HEAVEN, OR KLYNTAR HELL?

YOU ARE NOT DEAD, FLASH THOMPSON.

THIS WAS A *TEST*. AND YOU HAVE PASSED.

WE PASSED BY *SURRENDERING?*

VENOM, NOT ALL BATTLES CAN BE WON WITH VIOLENCE.

YOU STAND ACCUSED OF WALKING OFF THE *PATH*.

YOU HAVE BEEN THROUGH MUCH PAIN AND SUFFERING.

BUT THE CLEANSE SHOULD HAVE *PURIFIED* YOU.

PERHAPS... PERHAPS I WAS NOT WORTHY.

YOU *BOTH* HAVE PROVEN WORTHY.

BUT THIS TEST HAS SHOWN US THAT YOUR CLEANSE WAS NOT *COMPLETE*.

ANDREA BENTON. MANIA. ANOTHER *FRIEND* I FAILED TO PROTECT...

WHEN YOU WERE CLEANSED... SOMETHING WAS MISSING. SOMEONE WAS MISSING.

ANDREA BENTON IS IN *PAIN*.

THE MARK SHE BEARS HAS CORRUPTED HER.

THE HELL MARK.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

THE TRIAL IS OVER. THEY HAVE PASSED THEIR JUDGMENT.

ANDREA BENTON MUST BE CLEANSED.

ONLY THEN, VENOM, WILL YOU BE TRULY FREE OF THE PAIN THAT HAUNTS YOU.

ANDREA'S HELL MARK, WILL THE CLEANSE--

THE MARK THAT BURNS THROUGH ANDREA BENTON'S SOUL CANNOT BE CURED BY THE CLEANSE, FLASH THOMPSON.

HOWEVER, THERE IS A WAY TO TEMPER ITS EFFECTS.

IN THE OUTER RIM, THERE IS A TEMPLE ON THE LOST PLANET WENB. INSIDE THE TEMPLE LIES THE FOUNTAIN OF PURITY.

A DRINK FROM THIS FOUNTAIN WILL KEEP ANDREA'S DEMONS AT BAY, AND ALLOW HER TO BE CLEANSED.

THANK YOU.

GO IN PEACE, FLASH THOMPSON.

ARE YOU OKAY, MR. VENOM?
NO, HILLA, I AM NOT.
I'M SORRY. HEY, DID YOU SEE ME BEAT UP THOSE GUARDS?
NO, BUT I'M SURE YOU MADE YOUR MOTHER PROUD.
WHAT IS NEXT, FLASH?
THAT'S A GREAT QUESTION, IQA.
PLEASE FORGIVE ME, I DOUBTED--
YOU STOOD WITH YOUR FRIENDS. A NOBLE SENTIMENT. BUT AGENTS OF THE COSMOS MUST BE ABOVE SUCH TIES.
YOUR KLYNTAR IS STILL HEALING.
GO WITH YOUR *FRIENDS*, TARNA. WHEN YOU RETURN...
...WE SHALL SEE IF THE HONOR OF SERVING WITH YOUR KLYNTAR IS SOMETHING YOU ARE STILL WORTHY OF...

WHEN I BECAME A GUARDIAN, AND THEN AN AGENT OF THE COSMOS...I WAS SO HAPPY TO FINALLY FIND MY PLACE.

BUT THE TRUTH IS...I'VE LEFT SOME THINGS BEHIND THAT I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN CARE OF A LONG TIME AGO.

THIS WHOLE MESS... IT'S MY FAULT.

AND I'VE GOT TO FIX IT.

YOU WON'T BE FIXING IT ALONE, FLASH.

WE WILL HEAD TO WENB. THIS ELIXIR SHALL BE IN YOUR HANDS IN NO TIME.

I GOT THE FEELING IT AIN'T GONNA BE EASY TO GET, PIK.

DO WE SEEM EASILY FRIGHTENED, FLASH?

I SHOULD GO WITH YOU--

NO, FLASH. IT'S TIME.

FOR YOU TO GO HOME

I HATE LIARS.

I WAS RAISED BY ONE.

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.

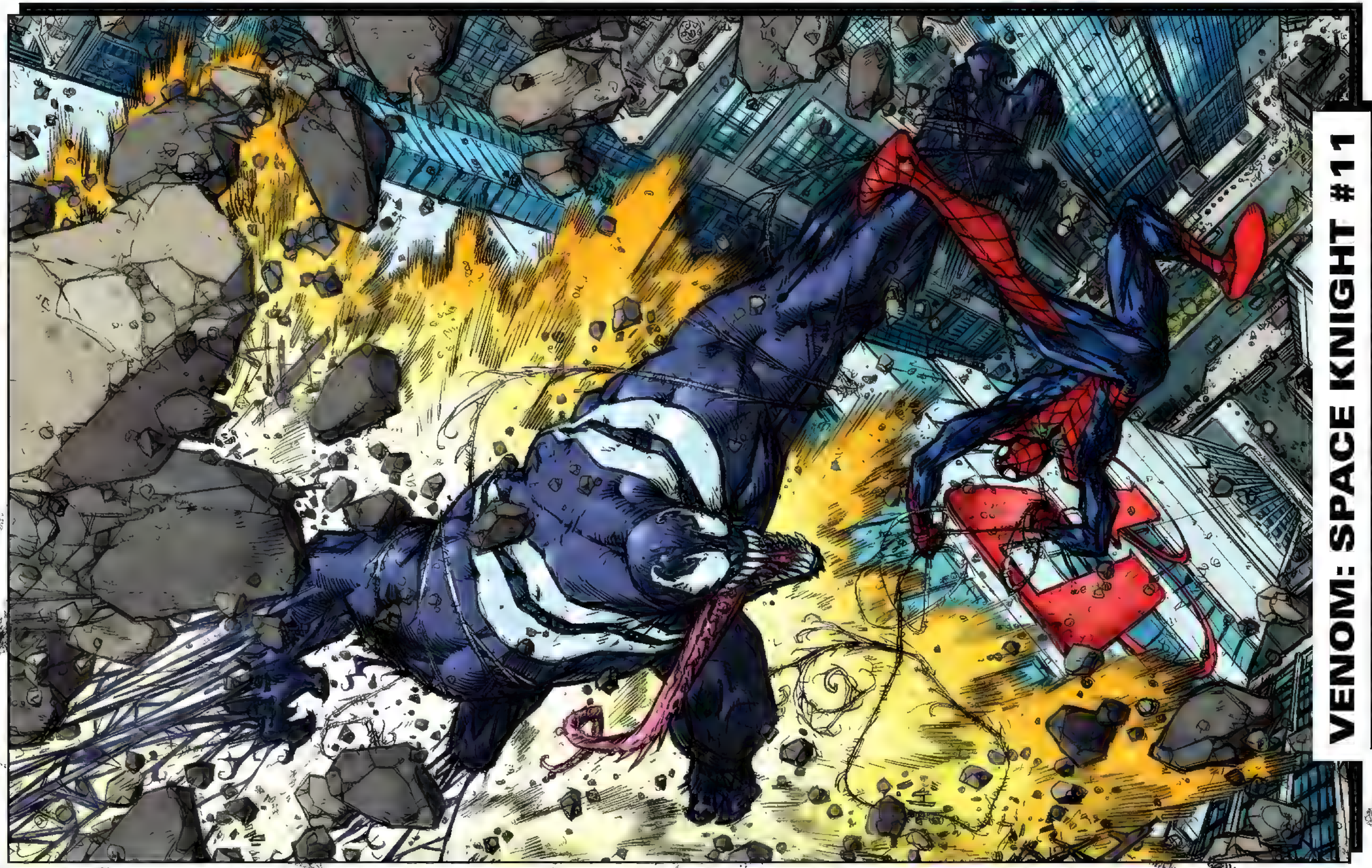
I SHOULD HAVE PROTECTED MY *FRIEND.*

PROTECTED HER FROM THE BIGGEST LIAR I KNOW.

ME.

...PLEASE... PLEASE HELP ME...

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #11



NEW YORK, EARTH. NOW.

IT'S STRANGE. BEING HOME.

NEW YORKER

EVERYTHING IS THE SAME.

EXCEPT ME.

I CAME BACK HERE WITH THE GUARDIANS TO HELP OUR FRIEND, CAROL.*

*AS SEEN IN THE GLORIOUS GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #12!

AND MY *NEW* FRIENDS ARE ON A MISSION SIX MILLION LIGHT-YEARS FROM HERE. GIVE OR TAKE.

FORTUNATELY, THOUGH, WE'RE BOTH LOOKING FOR THE SAME THING...

SYMBIOTE SUBJECT FOUND. TRACKING PROGRAM INITIATED.

PLANET WENB, SIX MILLION LIGHT-YEARS FROM EARTH. GIVE OR TAKE.

...WE'RE LOOKING FOR A CURE.

WHAT A GLORIOUS PLANET.

MAY I PUNCH HER, MOTHER?

IF YOU DON'T, I WILL.

OW. I WILL NOT STRIKE A CHILD.

THAT RULE DIDN'T STOP ME FROM HITTING YOU.

WHOMP

THE TEMPLE USED TO BE HERE.

PERHAPS THE SANDS BURIED IT. OR BLEW IT AWAY...

...BUT NOTHING STAYS LOST FOREVER.

ALIEN TARGETS ACQUIRED. BEGINNING TRACKING SEQUENCE. SENDING ALERTS...

ROSE MANOR WELLNESS CENTER, MIDDLETON, NEW YORK.

C'MON, FLASH. STAY CALM.

THIS ISN'T A FIGHT.

YOU'RE JUST VISITING YOUR MOM.

...I'M GLAD TO HEAR SHE'S DOING WELL.

SHE HAS GOOD DAYS AND BAD. BUT I KNOW SHE'LL BE HAPPY TO SEE YOU.

REALLY?

SHE TALKS ABOUT HER KIDS ALL THE TIME.

HEY, MA.

KNOCK KNOCK

YOU LOOK WELL.

DON'T LOOK SO BAD YOURSELF.

I'VE BEEN DOING A LOT OF WORK IN HERE, EUGENE. I WASN'T ALWAYS THERE FOR YOU. I KNOW HOW YOUR FATHER COULD BE... WITH HIS DRINKING, AND I...

I WISH...

I KNOW...

HONEY, I'M *SORRY.*

I'M SORRY, TOO, MA.

I'M SORRY, TOO.

PHILADELPHIA, EARTH. LATER.

I'M AVOIDING THIS. I'M AVOIDING...

...MANIA.

A.K.A. ANDREA BENTON. A.K.A. ANDI.

MY OLD PARTNER.

SHE'S BEEN FIGHTING CRIME ON HER OWN WITH PART OF THE SYMBIOTE, TAKING ON THE RED HAND GANG.

THEY'RE NEW. SPRUNG UP WHILE I WAS GONE.

SHE'S BEEN FIGHTING THEM ALL OVER TOWN.

BUT SHE'S OUT OF CONTROL.

I KNOW THAT FEELING.

I'VE BEEN GONE TOO LONG.

FLOATING THROUGH SPACE.

TARGET ALONE. CAGE PROGRAM INITIATED. C.E.O. INBOUND.

IT'S GOOD TO BE *GROUNDED.*

HEY...HEY, WHAT'S WRONG BUDDY?

WE...ARE... BEING...

SHOOM! SHOOM!

SHOOM! SHOOM!

...WATCHED!

SKREEEEEEEEEE

GGGAHHH!

SONIC DISRUPTORS.

T.U.R.N. IT. OFF!

THAT COLOR SCHEME. I KNOW IT...

HEYA, PAL...

...WE ARE WAY OVERDUE FOR A CATCH-UP.

THE TEMPLE...IT'S EMPTY. I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

WE CANNOT BE THE ONLY ONES TO SEEK SUCH A TEMPLE.

NO...

...YOU MOST CERTAINLY AREN'T.

WHO ARE THEY? THIEVES?

WORSE.

THEY'RE SPACE KNIGHTS.

NOW, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING: WHO CATCHES UP WITH AN OLD FRIEND BY CAGING HIM?

BUT LAST TIME WE TANGLED, YOU WERE A BIT OF A HANDFUL.*

*AS SEEN IN SUPERIOR SPIDER-MAN, NOW IN TRADE PAPERBACK AND ON MARVEL UNLIMITED!

SPIDER-MAN, LAST TIME I SAW YOU, YOU HAD QUITE A STICK UP YOUR--

NOW, THERE'S NO NEED TO BE RUDE.

I *JUST* WANT TO TALK...

...TO MY OLD PAL, FLASH THOMPSON.

YOU REMEMBER ME NOW?

HOW COULD I FORGET MY BIGGEST FAN?

"BIGGEST FAN," HUH?

WELL...

...THINGS CHANGE.

I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU.

YOU SURE ABOUT THAT? 'CAUSE YOU JUST DESTROYED A COUPLE MILLION IN R & D.

I DON'T LIKE CAGES.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON PUNCHES?

BURNNNSSSS!

I KNOW, RIGHT?

EXO-SUIT-- LINED WITH MICRO-FIBERS THAT RADIATE HEAT ON IMPACT. THE HARDER YOU'RE HIT, THE HOTTER THE HEAT.

TAKE THAT, JOHNNY STORM.

AVAILABLE FROM PARKER INDUSTRIES IN THE FALL.

STOP-- DON'T DO THIS.

YOU'VE GOT MY FRIEND IN THERE.

FLASH THOMPSON...

WHAM!

...IS MY FRIEND, TOO!

HULK!

GGRRRRAAGGGHHHHH!

WHOA!

THERE'S JUST NO TALKING TO YOU.

BUT MAYBE YOU'LL LISTEN...

...TO *THIS!*

INSPIRED BY A BUDDY OF MINE. REAL QUIET TYPE. YOU SPEAK *THROUGH* THE--

I UNDERSTAND HOW IT WORKS. WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY USE THAT FOR?

STOP!

COLLABORATE AND LISTEN.

SORRY.

NO... SPIDER-MAN... YOU DON'T...

DON'T WORRY, FLASH. YOU'RE SAFE NOW.

SPIDER-MAN. PLEASE, THAT'S MY FRIEND. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, HE'S CHANGED--

I'LL BE HAPPY TO LISTEN TO ALL THIS ONCE HE'S CONTAINED, SECURED, AND BACK IN MY LAB--

OH CRAP, HE'S RIGHT BEHIND ME, ISN'T HE?

NOOOOOO GGGGEEE!

I CAN WORK WITH THA--

OOOF!

VENOM, DON'T--

AAAGGH!

OKAY, LET'S DO THIS THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY.

WITH FISTS.

AND FEET.

THWIP!

AND WEBS.

RRRRIIIPPP!

OR NOT.

SO, THIS IS NEW--YOU CAN JUST BE YOU, NO NEED FOR A HOST. I MEAN, I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE NOT SO NEEDY, BUT--

AAAGH!

NOOO AAAAGGEE!

GOT IT. NO CAGE. AND NO HOST.

C'MON, V. WE'RE OLD FRIENDS. I USED TO *BE* A HOST, REMEMBER? LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS. MAYBE OVER LUNCH?

OR BRUNCH. BRUNCH WORKS, TOO.

I'M SURE THERE'S A GOOD ALL-DAY BREAKFAST JOINT AROUND HERE. AWAY FROM ALL THESE NICE--

THUD!

YOOOUUU...

...WERE A HOST?!

YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME? THAT HURTS MY FEELINGS.

NO-- VENOM, *DON'T!*

WAIT! STO--

WELCOME BACCCKKKK!

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #12

INSIDE THE VENOM SYMBIOTE.

NOW.

I ACCEPT YOUR SURRENDER, VENOM.

UM, HELLO?

ANYBODY?

ANY CHANCE THERE'S WI-FI IN HERE?

I LOVE WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH THE PLACE, VENOM. MINIMAL, YET HOMICIDAL.

YOU ARE CALLED SPIDER-MAN?

YOU *SERIOUSLY* DON'T REMEMBER ME?

UM, IS IT ME, OR DID WE JUST LEAVE EARTH?

THIS IS A MEMORY. MY MEMORY.

OF MY *HOME.*

PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES, HUH?

...DO YOU CALL EARTH, "PLANET OF THE HUMANS"?

SOMETIMES.

THIS IS *KLYNTAR.*

I WAS *BORN* HERE. MY PEOPLE, WE'RE BRED TO BE AGENTS. AGENTS OF THE *COSMOS.*

NOT GONNA LIE, THIS ISN'T EVEN THE CREEPIEST EGG HUNT I'VE EVER BEEN ON.

MY FIRST HOST WAS... NOT WORTHY. HE CREATED A THIRST IN ME.

I WAS ADDICTED... NO...

...I AM ADDICTED... TO RAGE.

FLASH BROUGHT ME HOME.

I WAS CLEANSED...

...MY MEMORIES ERASED, SAVE THOSE OF MY FIRST HOST, WHO IS BURNED INTO MY VERY BEING.

NOW I FOLLOW FLASH'S EXAMPLE...

...I TAKE THINGS ONE DAY AT A TIME.

I AM NOT THE VENOM YOU ONCE KNEW. I WILL NOT ENTER YOUR MIND. I WILL NOT FEED ON YOUR RAGE.

WHAT? I DON'T HAVE ANY--

RESPECTFULLY, YOU ARE TEEMING WITH IT.

TEEMING WITH RAGE FOR ME.

IT IS DESERVED, I'M SURE.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA.

LITERALLY.

THAT SPOT YOU SEE OVER THERE?

IS THAT THE WAY OUT?

IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING. NOT ALL OF ME WAS CLEANSED.

IT IS THE REASON FLASH AND I ARE IN PHILADELPHIA.

NO-- VENOM, DON'T!
WAIT... WHAT...?!
LIKE RIDING A BIKE. WITH HALLUCINATIONS.
SPIDER-MAN, I CAN EXPLAIN--
IT'S ALL GOOD.
YOUR PARTNER HAD YOU COVERED.
I MAY NOT KNOW WHAT I DID TO YOU, SPIDER-MAN...
...BUT FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH...I AM VERY SORRY.
I ONLY HOPE TO EARN YOUR FORGIVENESS IN TIME, THROUGH MY ACTIONS.
WELL, DIDN'T SEE THIS COMING.
PERHAPS THE FUTURE IS NOT AS FIXED AS WE'VE BEEN THINKING LATELY.

YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT, OLD FRIEND.

ALL THIS BUSINESS WITH ULYSSES*...IT'S MADE ME MORE ON EDGE THAN I SHOULD BE.

*AS SEEN IN THE RIPPING YARN CIVIL WAR II!

EVERYBODY DESERVES A SECOND CHANCE.

I HOPE YOU'LL CONSIDER GIVING ME ONE.

ANYTHING FOR YOU, SPIDEY.

PHEW. ALL RIGHT. GUESS WE'RE NOT GONNA HAVE TO THROW DOWN AFTER--

LOOK OUT!

LOOK OUT!

JINX! BUY ME A NEW PLANE THAT YOU DESTROYED TEN MINUTES AGO.

NOW... WHO HAD TO RUIN THAT MOMENT...?

THERE-- THAT MONSTER, IT'S LIKE *HER*. SEIZE IT!

I THINK SHE'S TALKING TO YOU.

WE'VE SEEN THESE THUGS BEFORE.

OH, HEY, FLASH, YOU'RE BACK IN THERE. HOPE I LEFT ALL THE SETTINGS LIKE YOU HAD THEM.

THESE GUYS AREN'T LOOKING FOR ME OR YOU. THEY'RE LOOKING FOR--

--MANIA.

WHO?

MY... PROTÉGÉ.

AND THE CHANGES JUST KEEP ON COMING.

SHE'S POWERED BY A PART OF THE SYMBIOTE. A PART THAT DID NOT GO THROUGH THE CLEANSE.

SHE'S OUT OF CONTROL.

AND NEEDS HELP.

YOU *BOTH* NEED TO BE LOCKED AWAY AND--

SHHHHHH! THE GROWN-UPS ARE TALKING.

BOOM!

GAAAH!

RRRRRR...

THWIP!

WELL, LOOK AT US TEAMING UP LIKE CAGNEY AND LACEY. NOW, LET'S HAVE A LITTLE CHAT WITH--

WHERE IS MANIA?

SHE... SHE KEEPS TO THE SEWERS MOSTLY.

SO, WHY ATTACK THE BIG GUY HERE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOURS TRULY?

WE WERE HOPING TO DRAW HER OUT...

...WE BROKE THE LAW, SURE, BUT...BUT THAT DON'T JUSTIFY WHAT SHE DID TO US...

...SHE'S A MONSTER.

AND SHE'LL PAY FOR-- *HLSDHGJH?!*

YEAH, YEAH, YEAH. I STOPPED LISTENING AFTER YOU SAID SEWERS.

HEY, IT'S *UH*... ME. CANCEL MY AFTERNOON.

CLIK

ALL RIGHT, VENOM, LET'S GO FIND YOUR FRIEND.

LEMME JUST GRAB MY SPARE FACE.

AND MY CONTAINMENT UNIT.

ARE YOU SURE?

SURE I'M SURE. IF WE USE THIS TO CAGE YOUR FRIEND'S SYMBIOTE THIS WHOLE THING IS A WRITE-OFF.

THANK YOU, SPIDER-MAN.

HEY, IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO FOR YOU WRAPPING ME UP BUT NOT MURDERING ME.

SO, ONCE WE FIND HER, SHE'S CLEANSED HOW, EXACTLY?

PARTLY BY BEING ABSORBED INTO THE REST OF ME, AND THEN I HAVE FRIENDS WHO ARE BRINGING AN...ELIXIR OF SORTS.

YOU HAVE FRIENDS? MAN, YOU REALLY HAVE CHANGED. WHERE ARE YOUR PALS NOW?

THEY ARE OFF-WORLD, BUT...

PLANET WENB. NOW.

"...I'M SURE THEY'LL BE HERE SOON."

WE'RE NEVER MAKING IT OFF THIS PLANET.

AT LEAST WE WILL DIE WITH HONOR.

WE WERE DOING JUST FINE BEFORE THESE SO-CALLED *KNIGHTS* SHOWED UP.

WE'RE NOT THE ONES WHO UNLEASHED THIS HORDE.

HOW ABOUT WE KILL THESE GUYS BEFORE WE KILL EACH OTHER?

THE SKRULL IS WISE.

AND WE WOULD HAVE UNLEASHED THE SAME HORDE OURSELVES, SINCE WE'RE BOTH LOOKING FOR THE SAME THING: AN ELIXIR FOR FALLEN COMRADES...

SO LET'S STAY ALIVE UNTIL WE FIND IT, DEAL?

"DEAL."

I LOVE THAT OLD-TOWN SEWER SMELL. IT'S LIKE THE NEW CAR SMELL, BUT AWFUL.

YOU'RE MAKING BAD JOKES. I GUESS YOU'RE BACK TO BEING THE OLD YOU AGAIN.

YEAH, THE ME YOU SAW LAST TIME WAS NOT MY BEST ME.*

*IT WASN'T HIM AT ALL--IT WAS DOCTOR OCTOPUS, AS SEEN IN THE THRILLING PAGES OF SUPERIOR SPIDER-MAN!

THIS NEW YOU IS PRETTY DIFFERENT, TOO. WORKING FOR MY OLD PAL, PETER PARKER, AT HIS MEGA-SUCCESSFUL COMPANY?

I LEAVE THE GALAXY FOR FIVE MINUTES AND EVERYTHING CHANGES.

CHANGE IS GOOD, RIGHT? I MEAN, BEING OFF-PLANET DID A WORLD OF AWESOME FOR YOUR DISPOSITION.

BOTH OF YOUR DISPOSITIONS, ACTUALLY.

IT'S BEEN AMAZING. BUT...

I'VE BEEN GONE TOO LONG. WAS SO BUSY TRYING TO FIX MYSELF, I FORGOT ALL THE THINGS I HAD LEFT BEHIND.

ALL THE PEOPLE I'D LEFT BEHIND.

WE'RE GONNA FIND YOUR FRIEND, PAL.

YOU SURE ABOUT THIS PART OF THE PLAN, THOUGH?

IF HORROR MOVIES HAVE TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT'S THAT: (A) WHEN THE SCARY MUSIC PLAYS, YOU SHOULD RUN, AND (B) SPLITTING UP IS USUALLY A BAD IDEA.

WE'LL BE FINE, SPIDEY.

"WE" LIKE YOU AND VENOM, OR "WE" LIKE--

WE'LL *ALL* BE FINE.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN AGENT OF THE COSMOS AND A SPACE KNIGHT?

AS SPACE KNIGHTS, WE DON'T HAVE TO ANSWER TO ANYONE.

AND WE WOULDN'T BANISH ANYONE FOR BEING A LITTLE OFF.

VENOM WASN'T BANISHED... BUT HE WAS... IMPURE HE JUST NEEDS TO FINISH THE CLEANSE AND--

WE TAKE OUR KNIGHTS AS THEY ARE.

THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE.

FOUND IT.

WHAT FOUL BEAST IS--

EASY, SNAKES...

...HE'S WITH US. AND HE'S THE REASON WE CAME FOR THIS ELIXIR.

YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE WATCHING THE DOOR, WINK.

WINK SORRY. WINK WANTED TO WARN MAHIA. WINK SAW MORE TROLLS APPROACHING.

HOW MANY MORE?

WINK FAIRLY CERTAIN...

"...ALL OF THEM..."

ANDI'S BEEN *LIVING* DOWN HERE?

ANDI... I'M SO SORRY.

ARE YOU?

SHOW ME...

...SHOW ME HOW SORRY YOU ARE!

UNFF!

AAHH!

WHAT... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

FIGHT BACK!

WHAM!

NO.

I DESERVE THIS, ANDI.

MY NAME IS...

WHAM!

...MANIA!

I'M SORRY, ANDI. FOR LEAVING.

AND FOR THIS...

NOW!

TIME-OUT!

AAAEEEIII!

YAAAHH!

F...FLASH...?

I GOT YOU, KID. I GOT YOU.

AND I GOT *YOU.*

BOTH OF YOU.

ALL OF YOU?

VENOM AND MANIA ARE IN HERE. FOR NOW.

ARE THEY--?

READINGS ARE STABLE. BUT LET'S GET TO MY LAB.

YOU GOOD?

I AM NOW.

PARKER INDUSTRIES, PHILADELPHIA BRANCH.

AS YOU CAN SEE, WE'RE STILL GETTING SET UP, BUT YOU'RE WELCOME TO STAY HERE WHILE SHE STABILIZES. AS FOR YOUR FRIENDS...

...THEY SEEM TO BE OKAY.

Y'KNOW, FOR A PILE OF ALIEN GOO.

THE CLEANSE SEEMS TO BE WORKING.

BUT THE HELL-MARK REMAINS AN ISSUE.

MAYBE PARKER INDUSTRIES' R&D CREW CAN MAKE A TOPICAL CREAM FOR THAT.

THANKS, BUT MY FRIENDS ARE BRINGING ME WHAT I NEED. WHAT VENOM NEEDS.

SPIDER-MAN... HONESTLY, THANK YOU. AND THANK PETER FOR ME WHEN YOU SEE HIM.

IT'S ALREADY DONE.

I GOTTA GET BACK TO NEW YORK. ULYSSES HAD ANOTHER VISION.

I HOPE THIS ONE INVOLVES DESSERT. CAN'T BELIEVE I CAME ALL THE WAY TO PHILLY AND DIDN'T GET ONE TASTYKAKE...

I'M NOT LEAVING YOU 'TIL WE GET THIS FIXED.

...FLASH...

HEY, HOW ARE THINGS IN THERE?

...THE SYMBIOTE... I HAVE CLEANSED IT. BUT THE HELL-MARK...

I KNOW. TARNA AND THE OTHERS WILL BE BACK SOON. WE'LL GET YOU THE ELIXIR--

...MANIA... IT...IT'S SO AFRAID...

IT'S GOT NOTHING TO FEAR FROM US, WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

...NO, FLASH...IT...IT IS NOT AFRAID OF US...

...IT...IT'S AFRAID...

...IT'S AFRAID OF ANDI.

VENOM: SPACE KNIGHT #13

PARKER INDUSTRIES, PHILADELPHIA BRANCH. NOW.

WELCOME HOME... COACH.

ANDI, STOP, THIS ISN'T--

THE HELL-MARK MADE ITS CHOICE...

...BURNED THROUGH THE SYMBIOTE...

...TO WHERE IT BELONGS...

...WITH ME!

NOW BRING ME BACK EVERY OUNCE OF MY SYMBIOTE, DEMONS.

AND VENOM'S AS WELL.

BOOM!

I TOLD HER EVERYTHING WAS GOING TO BE OKAY.

I *LIED* TO ANDI.

BUT MOST OF ALL I LIED TO MYSELF.

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LEFT HER ON HER OWN.

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LEFT, PERIOD.

I CAN MAKE THIS RIGHT.

I CAN MAKE THIS--

AAARGH!

SLAM!

GOTTA GET RID OF THESE DEMONS.

KRSSH

SPLAT

NOT BAD, COACH...

...JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

RRRRAAAAAA!

ANDI, DON'T--

DON'T WORRY, COACH...

...I'LL KEEP VENOM WARM FOR YOU.

BOOM!

AAAH!

SORRY WE'RE LATE FLASH

ARE YOU STILL FUNCTIONAL, SIR?

AS MUCH AS I'LL EVER BE.

HEY, WELCOME TO MY PLANET.

IT HAS A FOUL ODOR AND FEELS UNSTABLE.

I LIKE IT.

THANKS.

WHERE DID--

YOUR ASSAILANT WAS BLASTED OVER THAT WAY, SIR...

...BUT SHE SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED.

AND YOU GUYS ARE...

SPACE KNIGHTS. I'M MAHIA.

NAME'S PUNCH.

J'K.

WHO CARES ABOUT NAMES-- WHERE'D THAT CRAZY LADY GO?

SHE'S NOT CRAZY. SHE'S MY FRIEND.

THE HELL-MARK THAT WAS BURNED ONTO HER SYMBIOTE HAS MOVED TO HER.

SHE THINKS SHE'S IN CONTROL, BUT SHE'S NOT. I KNOW THE FEELING.

I'M HOPING YOU FOUND--

HERE.

IT SEEMED TO HELP WINK, A FRIEND OF OURS. HOPEFULLY THIS CAN HELP YOURS.

IT ISN'T A CURE, THOUGH. IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY.

THERE'S ALWAYS A CATCH.

UM, ANYBODY ELSE FEEL--

RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE

BOOM

HOLD FAST, I'LL SUMMON THIS PLANET'S--

GAHHH!

GRAB IQA, PIK.

WHAT FOR?

THROW HER AT THE GIANT DEMON'S CRYSTAL THINGIE.

MAKE HER FLY, MOTHER!

GOOD LUCK, IQA.

I NEED NO LUCK, PIK. I HAVE...

ROOOOAAAAAR!

NOOO!

...THE BLADE OF FIRE AND RAGE!

KR-ASH!

BOOM!

KRAK SMASH

THE BEAST... IT'S BREAKING APART...WHAT IS THIS--?

CLAW

LIKE I SAID...THERE'S ALWAYS A CATCH.

OKAY, STICK CLOSE. WE GOT THIS.

RESPECTFULLY, SIR, I THINK THE END IS FINALLY HERE. I AM GRATEFUL WE SHALL EXPERIENCE IT TOGETHER.

C'MON, COACH. GIVE UP.

THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE **BEST** AT.

WHA--

SLAM!

WINK HUNGRY.

MAN, YOU SPACE KNIGHTS COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.

OKAY, AND I...

...ENOUGH!

NO!

THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!

I HATE YOU!

I KNOW, AND I HATE ME, TOO.

AND YOU'RE RIGHT. THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.

BUT I'M GONNA MAKE IT RIGHT.

AAAH!

SHUNK

I DON'T... I DON'T WANT... I DON'T WANT TO BE ANGRY ANYMORE...

CAFE

ANDI... ANDI, ARE YOU--

OH...OH, NO...WHAT... WHAT HAVE I DONE...

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, KID.

IT'S MINE.

NO, IT'S THE HELL-MARK'S FAULT.

THAT'S ON ME, TOO.

DID THAT...DID THAT CURE ME?

IT'S A TEMPORARY FIX.

BUT WE'LL FIGURE THE REST OUT...

...TOGETHER.

I'M NOT GOING BACK TO THE AGENTS OF THE COSMOS.

LEMME GUESS, TARNA, YOU'RE BECOMING A SPACE KNIGHT?

GOING ON THIS...*ADVENTURE*... WITH YOU MADE ME REALIZE I WANT TO ANSWER TO NO ONE BUT MYSELF.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR SYMBIOTE?

I SHALL MISS MY PARTNER. BUT I HOPE THAT HE CAN FIND HIS OWN PATH AS WELL.

THANKS, TARNA. FOR EVERYTHING.

EVERYONE IN YOUR GROUP IS COMING WITH US, FLASH.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN AS WELL.

I APPRECIATE THAT. AND I MIGHT JUST DO THAT DOWN THE LINE...

...BUT I HAVE THINGS TO TAKE CARE OF HERE FIRST.

IQA, LISTEN--

YOUR PLACE IN MY HUSBAND STABLE REMAINS, FLASH THOMPSON.

DULY NOTED.

I AM NOT KISSING YOU.

BUT THE ROLLOS ARE FOREVER IN YOUR DEBT.

AND I'M FOREVER IN YOURS.

WHAT'S NEXT, SIR?

THAT'S UP TO YOU, 803.

BUT I AM IN YOUR SERVICE--

I'M ONLY SAYING THIS ONE LAST TIME.

BUT I HOPE YOU HEAR IT.

YOU ARE FREE.

I WILL MISS YOU, SIR.

PROVE IT... BY OUTLIVING US ALL.

AS YOU WISH.

ANDI CATCHES ME UP.

EVERYTHING *WAS* FINE.

BUT HER ANGER GOT THE BEST OF HER.

THE HELL-MARK SENSED A BETTER ALLY, AND *SHIFTED* TO HER.

SO YEAH, THAT DESCENT BUSINESS IS *STILL* OUT THERE.

AAAAAND I'M CURSED. THE END.

IT'S NOT THE END, KID. NOT NOW. NOT EVER.

LONG LIVE VENOM. AND LONG LIVE MANIA.

NOW. LET'S GO DO SOME GOOD.

YOU'RE SUCH A DORK.

DO ME A FAVOR, THOUGH. CAN YOU SHIFT BACK TO THE OLD LOOK? JUST FOR TODAY?

I THINK I LIKE THAT ONE BETTER.

FOR YOU, KID...

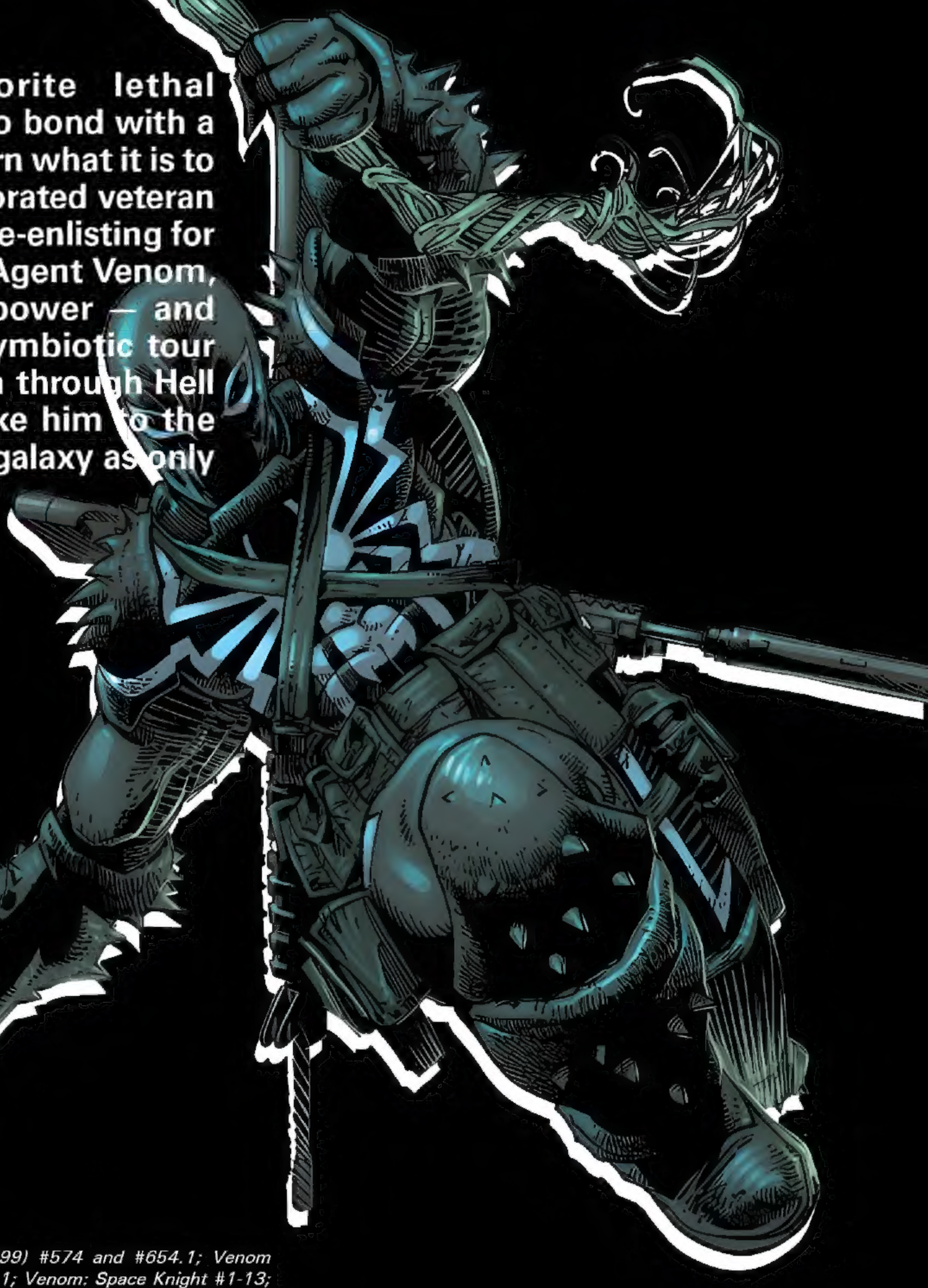
...ANYTHING.

LONG LIVE

VENOM

VENOM: ERRIE WHO?!

Everybody's favorite lethal symbiote is about to bond with a new host — and learn what it is to be a true hero! Decorated veteran Flash Thompson is re-enlisting for a new mission as Agent Venom, packing major firepower — and he'll need it. His symbiotic tour of duty will put him through Hell on Earth — and take him to the stars, guarding the galaxy as only a Space Knight can!



Collecting *Amazing Spider-Man (1999) #574 and #654.1; Venom (2011) #1-42, #13.1-13.4 and #27.1; Venom: Space Knight #1-13; Minimum Carnage: Alpha; Scarlet Spider (2012) #10-11; and Minimum Carnage: Omega; and material from Amazing Spider-Man (1999) #654* — written by Rick Remender, Cullen Bunn and Robbie Thompson with Jeff Parker, Rob Williams, Dan Slott, Christopher Yost and Marc Guggenheim; and illustrated by Tony Moore, Tom Fowler, Lan Medina, Declan Shalvey, Thony Silas, Kim Jacinto, Ariel Olivetti and Barry Kitson with Humberto Ramos, Stefano Caselli, Lee Garbett, Sana Takeda, Julian Totino Tedesco, Kev Walker, Marco Checchetto, Reilly Brown, Khoi Pham, Pepe Larraz, Jorge Coelho, Gerardo Sandoval and more.

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